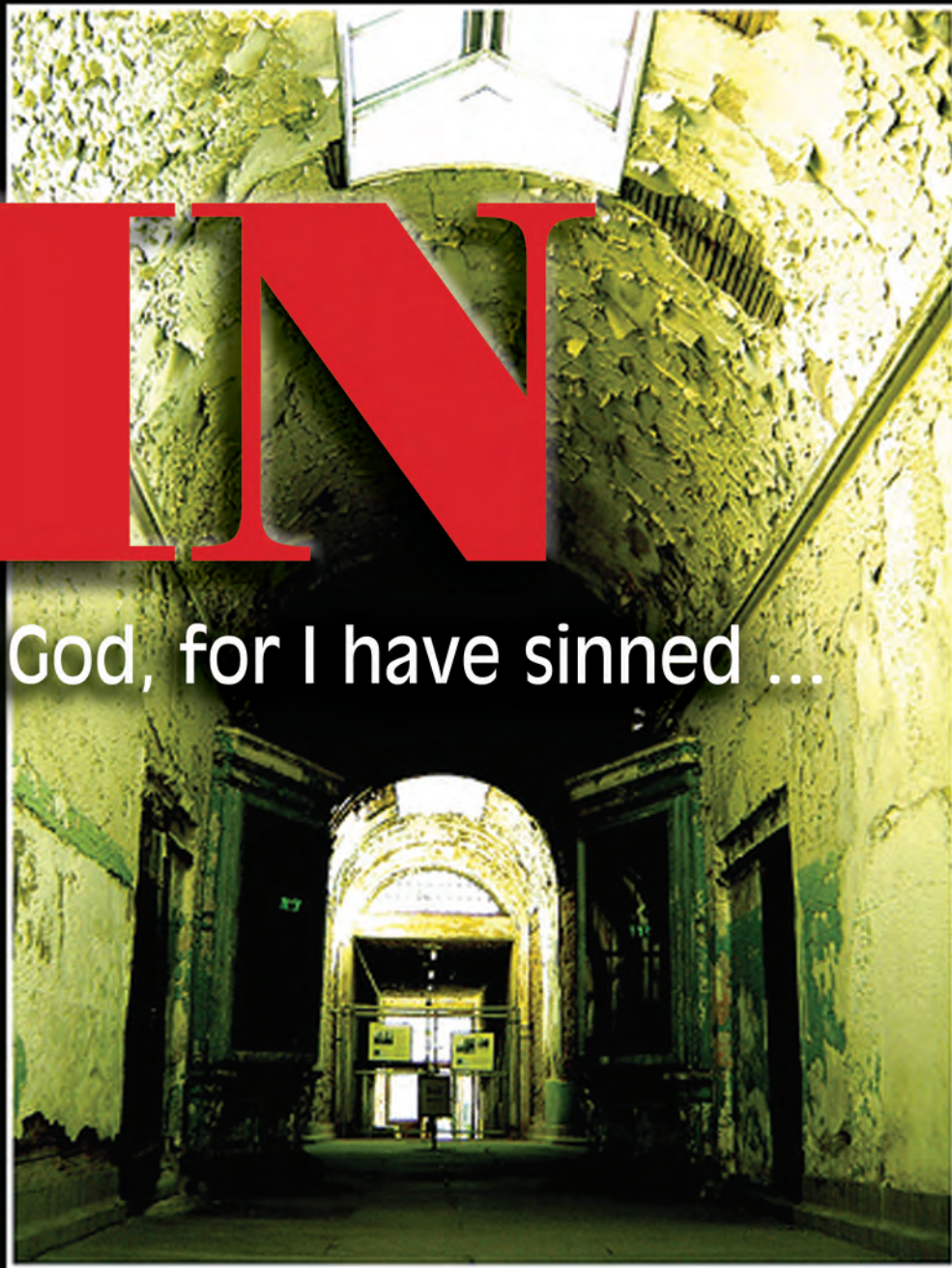


"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)

# SIN

Forgive me God, for I have sinned ...



**8** What is Sin? An overview of sin and how to overcome it.

**11** Can prophets be a source of guidance if they are sinful?

**20** Original Sin: Does the Bible teach that all are born sinful?

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# The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

**T**he Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in over 178 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah.



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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Arif Humayun

Hasan Hakeem, Design/Layout

Fateh Shams, Circulation

## Editor's Notes:

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations have been abbreviated in the text for readability (as, sa & ra respectively), we encourage all Muslims to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

**[www.muslimsunrise.com](http://www.muslimsunrise.com)**

**Cover Photo:** Designed by John Haviland and opened in 1829, Eastern State is considered to be the world's first true penitentiary. Its revolutionary system of incarceration, dubbed the Pennsylvania System, originated and encouraged solitary confinement as a form of rehabilitation.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## From the Holy Qur'an

Al-An'am Chapter 6 : Verse 121

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ ۚ إِنَّ  
الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا  
كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

**And eschew open sins as well  
as secret ones. Surely those  
who earn sin will be  
rewarded for that which  
they have earned.**

# Opening Commentary

---

## Salvation Depends on Faith

**I** affirm repeatedly and emphatically that if religious doctrines had been self-evident like philosophical propositions and mathematical equations, they would certainly not have been considered the basis for achieving salvation. Dear brethren, rest assured that salvation depends upon faith, and faith is related to the unseen. If the underlying reality of things had not been concealed, there would have been no faith, and without faith there would be no salvation. It is faith alone which is the means of winning Divine pleasure. It is a ladder for achieving nearness to God, and a spring for washing away the rust of sin. We are dependent upon God Almighty, and it is faith that discloses this dependence. We are dependent on God Almighty for our salvation and our deliverance from every ill. Such deliverance can be achieved only through faith. The remedy for the torments of this life and the hereafter is faith. When, through the power of faith, we find that a difficulty is not impossible of resolution, it is resolved for us. It is through the power of faith that we are able to achieve that which appears to be impossible and contrary to reason. It is through the power of faith that miracles and extraordinary events are witnessed, and what is considered im-

possible happens.

It is through faith that we are convinced of the existence of God. He remained hidden from philosophers, and thinkers could not discover Him; but faith leads to God even a humble one who is clothed in rags, and enables him



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

to converse with Him. The power of faith is the means of contact between a believer and the True Beloved. This power leads a poor humble one who is rejected of mankind to the palace of holiness, which is the throne of Allah and, gradually removing all intervening obstructions, reveals the countenance of the Eternal Beloved.

Arise then, and seek faith and bum the dry and useless tomes of philosophy; only through faith shall you achieve

blessings. One particle of faith is better than a thousand volumes of philosophy.

Faith is not only the means of achieving salvation in the hereafter, but also provides deliverance from the torments and curses of this life. We find deliverance from soul-melting sorrows through the blessings of faith. It is faith through which a perfect believer finds comfort and joy in the midst of anxiety, agony, torment and sorrow, and when he is confronted with failure in all directions and all the familiar doors appear locked and barred. Perfect faith removes all feeling of distance and separation. There is no wealth that can be compared to faith. In this world everyone, with the exception of the believer, is overwhelmed with grief. In this world everyone is afflicted with the agony of loss and unfulfilled desires, except a believer.

**Faith! how sweet** are your fruits and how fragrant are your flowers; praise be to Allah, how wonderful are your blessings and what beautiful lights shine in you. No one can reach the Pleiades unless he is inspired by you. It has pleased God Almighty that now you should arrive and philosophy should depart. Nothing can stop His grace. ■

[A'ina-e-Kamilit-e-Islim, Riil].ini Khazi'in, vol. 5, pp. 270-273, footnote].

# Editorial

Over the centuries God has provided guidance to the human race through revelation. Prophets and messengers of God who appeared in every nation and region of the world delivered His message to their respective people. All divine messages comprised of dos and don'ts, good acts and evil deeds, or a code of ethics.

According to chapter Ash-Shams in the Holy Qur'an, the basic knowledge of good and evil is revealed or ingrained within every human soul. Every soul is born innocent and has the option to do evil or good. An advanced and sophisticated code of behavior, essential for human spiritual development, is required of any religion. Spiritual guidance emanating from God through revelation is the only avenue due to God's infinite and ultimate knowledge of things.

In the codes of behavior offered by religions, intentional violations of God's commandments are referred to as "sin." The Holy Qur'an describes levels of sins in three categories. The first category is indecent behavior that only affects the perpetrator and has no bearing on other people in

society. The second category is behavior that directly impacts and damages society. The final stage of sin is described as open and defiant behavior against the commandments of God.

A few kinds of sin are minor in nature, and are forgivable through God's mercy for His creation. The others must face some degree of punishment before the forgiveness stage. It is like a person who needs to be hospitalized and endures painful surgical procedures before health is restored. The degree of temporary suffering corresponds to the intensity of disease and sickness.

Avoiding sin is essential step in our journey of spiritual elevation. There are three stages of good behavior as well. The first stage is when we perform a good deed in expectation of the same in exchange. The second stage is when we do a good act without any expectations of return. The final stage is of good behavior without even being conscious of it or having any thoughts of a reward. These emanate naturally through intense love of others. This is the kind of love that a mother gives her child.

It is an interesting phenomenon to study the concepts, descriptions and explanations of sins in various religions. We need to study them in our endeavor to avoid the behavior that displeases God so we can elevate ourselves by spending our energies in

achieving higher levels of spirituality. In the final analysis, it is our union with God that is the ultimate goal and it can be accomplished only by following His guidance and doing our utmost to please Him.

## Letter to the editor:

We appreciate the gratis subscription to your very professional and informative magazine. We find information in it that is useful for instructing our students. I have come to appreciate the Ahmadiyya teachings and their universal application.

Your Spring issue for 2007 on God's Prophets I found especially interesting with information that can be shared with our students. As a Christian minister I am fascinated with the Holy Quran's reference to the prophets found in the Bible.

I am currently researching all information regarding the Temple of Solomon. I would be most interested in the Muslim teachings about the Temple and Solomon, if any. Might I suggest a future issue of The Muslim Sunrise be devoted to the Muslim Temples around the world? An understanding as to why they are holy and their historical significances would be fascinating.

Thank you for changing our subscription address and for continuing to share your magnificent publication with us.

Sincerely,  
Rev. F. Lee Thompson  
IDAHO



# The Khalifa's Friday Sermon:

TRUTH OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH

**Summary of the Friday Sermon, delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, on February 8, 2008.**



*Temporary impediments come, and will certainly continue to come, but every Ahmadi should fight back with the remembrance of Allah, or in other words, prayers.*

**I**n his Friday sermon, Hadhur spoke about the verity of the Promised Messiah's mission.

He said the effects of prayer manifest during trials and tribulations and that God is recognized through prayer. Without turning to God with prayers, faith is meaningless. All Ahmadis should turn to God, not only in times of adversity, but when enjoying comfort and prosperity. However, the faith of believers is strengthened during difficult times, and their worship is enhanced.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) wrote that great misfortunes come to pass from the time one supplicates a prayer, until the acceptance of the prayer. However, those firm in faith sense Allah's support even in these difficult times. One should never get anxious nor nurture negative feelings that Allah is not 'listening'.

Hadhur said a recent initiative has been formulated to harass Ahmadis in some countries. It is rooted in jealousy and is designed to cause governments to take actions against Ahmadis. However, this fire of jealousy will end up in the self-destruction of the enemies of Ahmadiyyat.

Hadhur recited (62:4) and commented that it relates to the latter-days. The verse ends with the two Divine attributes Al Aziz and Al Hakeem (The Mighty & the Wise). This implies that none can stop what the Mighty and Wise God decrees, and His message will reach wheresoever He wills it to, regardless of any impediments.

Hadhur said persecuted Ahmadis should be patient and should continue in prayers. In addition, Ahmadis who are enjoying peaceful areas of the world should pray for their spiritual brethren. Believers are like one body, if one part aches, the entire body feels the pain, and Ahmadis should feel the pain of any human being.

In particular, Ahmadis in Pakistan, India, and Indonesia are facing the harassment of ignorant

Muslims. They are being forced into ridiculous court cases and legal obstacles.

In addition, the Al Arabia satellite channel which aired Ahmadi programs was blocked without prior warning by many powerful Arab governments. We determined this only after several Arab viewers wrote in to complain about the cessation of our programs. However, as Allah is the Best of Planners, we contacted a European satellite company and are now contracting through them. As is our experience with the ways and blessings of Allah, this European company has a much broader coverage, and our message is now broadcast to many more viewers.

Temporary impediments come, and will certainly continue to come, but every Ahmadi should fight back with the remembrance of Allah, or in other words, prayers.

With the 100 year anniversary of our Khilafat fast approaching, we can expect even greater envy from antagonistic groups. However, as is the case with jealousy, this only reaffirms that we have something they desperately want – the Caliphate. They lost it with their disobedience and they continue to remain lost. Universally, our opponents openly declare that the Muslim world cannot progress without Khilafat. They are absolutely correct. Ironically, they are quick to point out the problem, but they continue to fight the solution.

Hadhur said we should pray that Allah protect us from their evils and keep us steadfast. We should also pray for them, who have strayed from the truth. May Allah grant them guidance to the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace). Ameen.



**Mubasher Ahmad, M.A. LL.B.**

**I**t may seem easy to identify a “sin” in any given belief system, but when looked at from different religious perspectives, a particular “sin” in one faith may not be a wrongdoing for the followers of other religions. The same act could be wrong in one religion, but commendable in another. For example, in Sikhism to cut hair is considered a sin; but the Buddhist monks keep shaven heads and faces; and to cut one’s hair during the pilgrimage of Hajj is a required meritorious act for Muslims. In Buddhism and Jainism, killing any animal, even a worm, is strictly forbidden. In Hinduism, the cow is a sacred animal and is revered like a mother-figure. Its killing is a grievous sin. However, for Jews, Christians, Muslims, and many others, slaughtering animals and eating their meat is common. In fact, animal sacrifice is an integral part of these faiths. Similarly, drinking alcohol is an abhorrent sin in Islam, but not so in Christianity and Judaism. In the Bible, wine is a gift from God and drinking alcoholic beverages is a part of Jewish and Christian social and religious life. Wine is used in communal ceremonies of marriage and the Feast of Passover. The first miracle performed by Jesus was changing water into wine at a Jewish wedding.

Consumption of liquor reaches its height on Christmas Eve.

### Sinful Creeds?

Identifying sin becomes all the more challenging when major world religions uphold conflicting creeds, and the very fundamentals of one faith are acts of sin in others. For example, Christianity upholds the doctrine that God has a triune personality. He was born in the person of a man called Jesus, and suffered death to save humanity from the bondage of sin. Although Hinduism accepts the concept of God’s incarnation as a man, it is a blasphemous sin in Judaism and Islam. Moreover, Christians believe there is no salvation without faith in Jesus’ atoning sacrificial death, whereas Jews view him as a false prophet who suffered an accursed death on the cross. Hindus worship many gods and goddesses and make their images in human and animal forms. Monotheists condemn this as idolatry - the most heinous of all sins. Thus, an entire belief system can be viewed sinful if in conflict with the fundamentals of another religion. This is why some religions consider apostasy as an unforgivable or eternal sin.

### Breaking the Law of God

In general, sin is understood as anything against the commandments of God. It could be an omission of what God wants us to perform, or a commission of what He forbids us to carry out. Sin is lawlessness, transgression, and rebellion against Divine dictates. But in Christian theology, St. Paul takes exception to the Divine Law. He claimed that no one would be declared righteous in God’s sight by observing the Law, because through the Law believers become conscious of sin (Romans 3:20). In a religion such as Buddhism which is silent about God, sin is not defined as an offense against God’s established instructions. It is a deviation from the rules and regulations of the moral or spiritual order of the faith – the Dharma – which naturally carries a negative consequence for an individual or society at large. Any act that one may feel is “unnatural” against the pure conscience embedded in human nature could be considered as sin. Another way to understand the nature of sin is by defining it as “missing the mark.” But this does not imply that all human imperfections are sins. If a student misses good grades in an examination, it is no sin. It is necessary, therefore, to define the ultimate standard, the benchmark



relevant to sin. For example, if the ultimate objective is to have a loving relationship with God, then any act, thought, or tendency that keeps the believer away from God's love would become a sin. It would also include all the factors that may cause a person to be led towards an act of sinful nature. Whatever tends to cause an obstruction between man and God, or becomes a hurdle in the way towards one's ultimate moral or spiritual objective, becomes a sin.

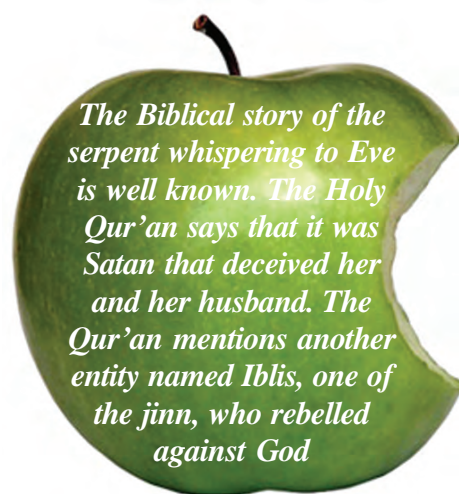
## Islamic Perspective

From the Islamic perspective, the ultimate purpose of man's creation is to "worship" God (51:57); that is, to know and love Him so much that one's personality transforms and starts reflecting the beautiful attributes of God. Thus, the final objective for man is to become God's image on earth. In other words, man becomes united with God, becomes one with Him. Indeed, for achieving this purpose, one has to devote one's life entirely in service of God by surrendering personal egotistical inclinations to His will. Such selfless service to God requires obeying all of His commandments, using various human faculties to the maximum. Any thing that takes one away from the worship of God in this sense, or diminishes one's love for Him or for His creation would amount to sin. Islam categorically rejects the concept of what is known as "original sin." All humans are born pure and innocent, without any tarnish of sin on their souls. According to the Holy Qur'an, the mistake committed by Adam and Eve resulted from a state of forgetfulness. Once they realized their error, they felt a deep sense of remorse, and asked God for His help and forgiveness. They had to face some consequences of their mistake, and lost the carefree bliss of living in the Garden, but their repentance and prayers were accepted by the Merciful and Ever-Forgiving God. They were forgiven and subsequently remained connected with God. No one "inherited" sin through the process of reproduction. If sin is defined as breaking God's law, and steering away from God's love, then no one is born in sin. An act of sin is perpetrated when a person is able to make distinction between right and wrong as prescribed by God, and he/she intentionally chooses to go against God's will. If there is no intention to break the Law of God, but a wrongful act takes place accidentally, it is considered to be a slighter sin. At times, a person may not be able to follow a commandment of God to the letter, and is compelled under particular circumstances to do what might be otherwise wrong. This is not a sin. For example, to eat the flesh of swine is forbidden in Islam, but

if that becomes the only means of survival in terms of life and death then it is not a sin. Out of all the categories of sins, none can be attributed to a new born child. The most one may assume is that humans are self-centered by nature, and gratifications of some basic instincts may be expected. But this tendency does not make a person a "sinner" until a clear commandment of God, or some rule of moral or spiritual discipline is broken. Frailty of human character is taken for granted, but sin cannot be attributed to innate human nature.

## Categories of Sins

Sins can be divided into three main categories: sins against God, sins against other human beings, and sins against self. God is the moral and spiritual Lawmaker, and He establishes His own rights as well as the rights of His creatures. A believer has obligations to comply



with God's directives to establish all the three kinds of rights. Failing in his responsibility towards any one of these obligations makes a person sinful.

The greatest of God's rights is that He Alone should be worshipped based on personal love for Him, and not for any selfish motive. In Islam, therefore, shirk (associating anyone as a partner with God) is the greatest of all sins. In Judaism and Islam, to make His graven image is another major sin. The greatest right of fellow human beings is that they should be loved with full sympathy.

All major religions place great emphasis on upholding the rights of others. Respect and obedience of parents holds great value among the moral obligations towards others. The list of sins against other human beings is very long and comprehensive in most belief systems. It includes sins against close relatives, spouses, neighbors, community members, and even

strangers. Lying, cursing, bearing false witness, stealing, betraying a trust, deceiving, injustice, back-biting, and being cruel are some of the commonly accepted sins against others. Other sins relate to human sexual behavior, such as fornication, adultery, incest and homosexuality. One of the most grievous sins is to take innocent life. Thou shalt not kill is fundamental to the Divine Law of all religions. Sanctity of life cannot be desecrated. In Islam, some sins also relate to financial matters. These include bribing, gambling, deceiving in business transactions, and practicing usury. The Holy Qur'an clearly forbids conferring secretly with each other for committing any sin or transgression (58:10). Sins may be open or discreet, and the Holy Qur'an forbids both kinds saying, "And eschew outward sins as well as inward sins" (6:121).

Many religions recognize rights pertaining to one's own self. To hurt one's self is considered an enormous sin. Use of intoxicants and other self destructive habits or addictions such as drug-abuse, gluttony and sloth are sins against one's own person. Suicide is a major sin and it is unforgivable in Islam. It deprives oneself from repentance and seeking forgiveness of God.

## Sources of Sin

What are the sources of sin? What causes man to rebel against God or to tread on the rights of others? Is it some evil entity outside the human mind, or is it something inside the human psyche itself? Various belief systems have tackled this question in diverse ways.

The Biblical story of the serpent whispering to Eve is well known. The Holy Qur'an says that it was Satan that deceived her and her husband. The Qur'an mentions another entity named Iblis, one of the jinn, who rebelled against God: "And recall when we said to the angels, 'Make obeisance to Adam.' So they obeyed except Iblis, he refused stubbornly and waxed proud, and he was already one of the disbelievers" (2:35). Iblis objected to God giving preference to Adam over him, and said to God, "If you grant me respite until the Day of Resurrection, I will most certainly bring his [Adam's] progeny under my sway, having overpowered them, I shall destroy them for sure, except a few." (The Holy Qur'an 17:63).

For Satan, delusion and deception are effective tools to lead mankind to commit sin. He makes sinful acts appear beautiful and pleasing to senses, and advantageous to our selves (16:64). According to Matthew [4:1-11], Jesus

was himself tempted by Satan on three occasions. Thus, sensual joy, satisfying base instincts, or material gains are the main attractions. Pride, self aggrandizement, and finding fault and disrespect to others are common causes for many wrongdoings. Therefore, it is said that Satan runs in everyone's bloodstream. It becomes rather impossible to blame an outside entity while indulging in sinful thoughts or activities. Having a free will, humans remain responsible when they choose to follow Satan. Therefore, to avoid sin, it is extremely important that we should have full knowledge and correct understanding of the subtle and deceptive nature of Satan's power of enticement working from within us. When a person strays away from the source of real and everlasting joy – that is God – he/she commits sin. Thus, sin hurts one by encroaching upon true happiness, and becomes a source of pain and torment in this life and the Hereafter. In this sense, every one remains responsible for the ultimate success or failure in his/her devotion to God.

## Remedies for Sin

How to refrain from sin is a central question for humanity. For those who believe in God, all acts of sin can be redeemed through the Grace and Mercy of God. His Grace and Mercy are attracted by earnest prayer, sincere repentance and virtuous acts. The Holy Qur'an states man is fashioned in the best of forms, saying, "Surely, We have created man in the best make" (95:5). Humans have full potential to remain connected with God, and to become one with Him. From birth the natural relationship between man and God is healthy and well-balanced. The human heart is like a mirror designed to absorb and reflect the light of God. Sin acts like a poison, or a dark cloud. By committing an act of sin, or entertaining even a sinful thought, the wholesome spiritual relationship between man and God undergoes a negative change. If not corrected, the heart gradually loses its brilliance and darkens in proportion. If a sinful state is not effectively cured in a timely manner, spiritual death may become imminent. Metaphorically speaking, the heart becomes engulfed in darkness. Sin can make a man the worst of the worst – the lowest of the low (95:6). But man is endowed with wonderful powers and natural faculties to rebound into the light of the Ever-Forgiving God Who loves him. The helping factors are many, but of the utmost importance are faith and good works (95:7). A person should never

lose hope, nor despair of the mercy of God. Reformation and redemption may look difficult, but are always possible. Regardless of the gravity of one's sins, God has empowered each and every one of us to overcome our shortcomings and weaknesses. Sin can be overcome with full trust in God's love, His help through prayers, and the necessary remedial measures.

## Love and Fear of God

Love and fear of God play an important role in shunning sinful inclinations and overcoming evil temptations. To shun sinfulness, one should always keep in mind that death is a certainty, and one day our earthly life is sure to end; and then, after death, there is certainly accountability before God for all our actions. Those who do not believe in the Hereafter tend to be bold in committing sins. Once a person is fully convinced that there is an Almighty God watching over him/her, and Who would punish him/her for his misdeeds, then it becomes rather difficult to disobey Him. Once the deadly nature of sin is exposed as a poison for the soul, resulting in a tormented spiritual death, then naturally man would desist from committing it. To have certainty and complete faith in the existence of God, to have full knowledge of His powers, and to realize one's accountability to Him in the Hereafter, are the main factors that help us to retain our righteousness and piety. Once the heart becomes fully drenched in the Greatness and Glory of God, no one dares to break His Law. But if one holds dearer someone other than God in one's heart, then the misplaced love leads to sin. God is often replaced by our love for the self, uncontrolled gratification of natural urges, or material gains of this life. In short, any thing that keeps us away from God's love, mercy and grace, can be called sin. Nevertheless, even when we lose His love, there are ways to regain and absorb God's love, grace and mercy.

## Seeking God's Help through Prayer

To save ourselves from sin, and to remain unsullied, we must seek help through prayer from the Gracious and Merciful God. The Holy Qur'an states, "O, ye who believe! Fear God and seek means of nearness to Him, and strive in His way that you may prosper" (5:36). Sincere remorse must be expressed in full humility. Asking for forgiveness of sins from God helps fortify us against the onslaught of sins. Without Divine protection,

we tend to become victims of temptations. Security from sin is obtained through the grace of God. Once a man's heart and mind are "possessed" by God's grace, then his conscience keeps a watch over his thoughts and actions, and he gains a new strength to fight against sin. He experiences a natural aversion to sin, and joy in virtue.

## Prudent Planning and Keeping Good Company

In addition, the Holy Qur'an teaches us that keeping the company of the righteous is conducive to developing a strong moral character to resist sin. It states, "O believers! Fear Allah, and be with the truthful" (9:119). A virtuous domestic and social environment plays a vitally important role in keeping a disposition against sins. To create a morally wholesome and appropriate environment, one has to make a conscious effort and diligent planning. In fact, proper planning and praying to God go hand in hand. The Messiah and Mahdi of our time, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may Allah's peace be on him) says, "Man needs to eschew sin, and do good deeds. He should worship God the Exalted and obey Him. When he stays away from sin and worships God, his heart is filled with abundant blessing, and this is the goal of man's life ... When he prudently develops a plan, and commits himself fully to earnest prayer, then God Almighty grants him salvation, and consequently he comes out of sinful life. (Malfoozat, vol.9, pages 397 and 406.)

As God is the Most Loving, He fully responds to man's life of worship, and bestows His blessings, mercy and grace upon the seeker of His love. God helps and leads him towards Himself, and grants him a taste of His union and full reconciliation in this very life. God becomes the Eternal Source of happiness and joy in a man's life. In other words, it is always possible for man to attain a spiritual height where acts of virtue flow through him naturally, and he begins to dislike acts of sin. It is an uphill struggle, but success is promised. "Those who avoid grave sins and all indecencies, excepting only minor faults, for them your Lord is of immense forgiveness. He knows you well from the time He created you from the earth, and when you were covered up in the wombs of your mothers. So ascribe not purity to yourselves. He knows best him who is truly righteous" (The Qur'an 53:33).■



# How to Get Rid of Sin

## ...according to the world's great religions

By Waqas Malik

**T**o err is human is a famous established saying, which means that people make mistakes from time to time. Sin is an error with spiritual consequences, which results from poor control over human desires and animal instincts. The recognition of an error comes from the knowledge of it. If someone doesn't know that an action being performed is wrong, then a correction will not occur. Such errors will continue to be committed until made aware of it. The same is the case with sin. It is therefore established without a doubt, that to get rid of sin one must be able to recognize and identify it. You can only fight what you can see.



How does one go about identifying sin? There are two main sources for the recognition of sin. First and foremost is through divine guidance. The second is through the established values of human existence. The second source of 'established values' includes inner moral qualities bestowed by God, which guide those who seek His help from sin. This also includes the feelings of remorse one gets when one commits a theft, or when one commits a murder. It is established by all nations and all religions that murder, stealing, and lying are all sins. This is what is meant by established values. Allah has given an inner mechanism to all humans to judge one's actions as good or bad. For example, when one wrongly punishes an innocent person, one knows that this action is wrong through this inner mechanism.

Let's turn to the guidance given by different religions on how to identify and then get rid of sin. Specifically, we will examine what Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam teach about identifying and removing it.

In Hinduism, the term used for sin is *paya*, which means actions that violate Dharma. Dharma is code of conduct. It is following rules and laws established in accordance with Hindu Scriptures (Vedas). There are no specific actions which are defined as sinful but general guidance is given around Hindu Dharma, such as good thoughts, words, actions and company of the wise. Failure to comply with this Dharma will result in sin. Committing a sin creates bad karma. Karma means deeds. Some factions among Hindus

add the caste system to be part of Hindu Dharma, while others do not. The caste system puts each person in a specific role. That is the Dharma for that caste. Everyone in a particular caste has to follow the code of conduct (Dharma) established for that caste. Failure to follow or do otherwise is considered a sin. For example, the supreme caste, Brahmin, is to rule over all. Their role is to give commands and be rulers. They cannot marry into lower castes. Such an act will be considered sinful. Moreover, the lower castes are made to serve Brahmins. So once someone is born in a caste, their life is laid out by the caste system.

According to Hinduism, if one dies in a sinful state then in the next life that person can be reincarnated as an animal such as a dog or a cat. Hinduism prescribes one big remedy to getting rid of sin that is to call the names of its Gods. There is a story in Hindu mythology which mentions a man (Ajamil) who lived all his life in sin and was forgiven for calling the name Krishna by accident on death bed. There are also other practices based on Hindu myths, such as bathing in the River Ganga, India to wash away sin and become purified.

Judaism defines sin as a failure to comply with divine commandments. Sin results from the violation of divine law. Judaism teaches that sin is an action, not a state of mind. As Moses (Peace be on him) brought a law for his followers, any deviation from that law is considered a sin. This law mainly comprises of the Ten Commandments (Exodus Chapter 20, Verses 2-17). The Hebrew word for sin is *avera*, which means transgression. According to Jewish Scriptures there are three main categories of sin. The first one is when someone commits a sin intentionally. This is the most serious category. The punishment for this sin is highest. The second one is when someone commits a sin accidentally. This is less serious, yet punishment can be given for such a sin. The third one is when someone commits a sin in ignorance. This is not even considered sin and no punishment will be given for this cat-

egory. Judaism mentions that sin occurs as animal instincts incite to evil. This is stated in the Torah (Old Testament) as:

“And the God smelled a sweet savor; and the God said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is



evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.” Genesis (Chapter 8, Verse 21)

Judaism teaches that God forgives sin because of His attribute of mercy. This is stated in Torah as:

“Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.” Numbers (Chapter 14, Verse 19)

This verse indicates how Moses (Peace be on him) asked for God's mercy just as he had shown His mercy before. The Torah prescribes sacrificing of animals when one commits a sin, and then mentions that

as Moses prayed for forgiveness of his followers, similarly prayers to God should be made to attain forgiveness of sins. Then there are more ritualistic approaches to get rid of sin. ‘Yom Kippur’ is annual event, which is a day spent to get rid of sins committed during the year. The word ‘Yom’

means ‘Day’ and ‘Kippur’ means ‘Atonement,’ so the term means ‘Day of Atonement.’ This day is spent confessing sins and trespasses of religion. Complete fast (no food or drink) for the whole day and night is required if health and age allow, no work is to be performed, no washing or bathing, no anointing one's body, or engaging in sexual relationships. This has similarities with Islam's practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Christianity defines sin as failure to obey the commandments of God. This definition is drawn by Christians from the disobedience of Adam and Eve which resulted in the ‘Original Sin.’ Original Sin is fundamental to Christian belief. It means that Adam and Eve's sin of disobeying God's instructions resulted in the eternal damnation of human race. Now each and every human that is born carries that original sin. This sin stays with that person unless and until they believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Thus, anyone who does not believe as Christians believe carries this original sin and can never get rid of it even by living a pure and

pious life. According to Christians, the reason Jesus (Peace be on him) came was to die for the sin committed by Adam and Eve. Apart from the original sin, Christianity teaches moral values and follows the same Ten Commandments set out by the Torah. Anyone who does not follow or violates these teachings commits a sin. To get rid of sin Christians practice formal confessions. This teaching comes from Bible where it is mentioned:

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James Chapter 5 Verse 16

In accordance with the above verse the



***Holy Qur'an mentions many sins to make humans as aware as possible. For instance:***

***“And whoso associates partners with Allah has indeed devised a very great sin.”*** *Al-Nisa Chapter 4, Verse 49*

***“Shall I inform you on whom the evil ones descend? They descend on every lying sinner.”*** *Al-Shuara Chapter 26, Verse 223-223*

Christians have created formal confessions, where a sinner will confess the sins committed in front of a righteous or holy man. This ought to trigger a prayer for the sinner which will ward off the committed sin.

**I**slam's claim of being a universal, final, and complete law given by God is reinforced when one studies its teachings about how to identify and get rid of sin. Islam lays complete guidance for mankind on how to identify sin, methods to guard against it, and how to get rid of it. Islam divides sin into two major categories. The first one being Gunah-e-Kabira, which means the greater sin. The second one is Gunah-e-Saghira, which means the lesser sin. The biggest or greatest sins are those mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. These include associating partners with Allah, adultery, theft, and murder, to name a few. The lesser sins are those which one commits due to occasional carelessness, even when someone is trying to safeguard against sin. This includes being rude or being late.

Holy Qur'an mentions many sins to make humans as aware as possible. For instance:

“And whoso associates partners with Allah has indeed devised a very great sin.”  
Al-Nisa Chapter 4, Verse 49

“Shall I inform you on whom the evil ones descend? They descend on every lying sinner.” Al-Shuara Chapter 26, Verse 223.

“O ye who believe! Avoid much suspicion; for suspicion in some cases is a sin.

And spy not on one another, neither backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Certainly, you would loath it. And fear Allah, surely, Allah is oft-Returning with compassion and is Merciful.” Al-Hujurat Chapter 49: Verse 13

“The hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, but He will punish them for their deception. And when they stand up for Prayer, they stand up lazily and to be seen of men, and they remember Allah but little.” Al-Nisa Chapter 4: Verse 143

The above verses call out actions which earn Allah's displeasure and are considered sinful. The Holy Qur'an identifies many actions as sinful in order to provide guidance to believers. It does not leave any ambiguity and explains vividly with reasoning the great sins one must stay away from. The Holy Qur'an does not just give specific sins a believer should beware of, but goes beyond that. The Holy Qur'an gives general guidance based on principles which help a believer determine whether an act is sinful or not. One of the verses which gives such guidance is:

“You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin good and forbid evil and believe in Allah.” Al-Imran Chapter 3, Verse 111

This verse mentions that any act which is not for the good of mankind, evil in nature, and against the belief of Allah is a sin. Islam teaches that the purpose of man's creation is to come closer to Allah. Sin results

due to lack of belief in Allah. If one believes that Allah exists and is watching over one's actions, then one would never commit a sin.

The Promised Messiah (peace be on him) explained sin as:

“God is the source of eternal happiness and pleasure for man's life. When a person separates from Him or leaves Him in one way or another, about such a state of a person it is said that he has sinned.”  
Malfoozat, Vol. 10, pp.357

This clearly explains that sin is not only an action according to Islam, but it can be a state. Everything that takes a believer away from the Perfect Creator, the One Supreme, the Provider of peace and blessings, is a sin. This is one of the marked differences of Islam compared to other religions. It mentions sin as a state and a journey towards or away from Him. One is progressing towards Allah when one is moving away from sin. Similarly one is moving away from Allah when progressing towards sin. Therefore, eliminating sin can be used as a mechanism to attain nearness to Allah.

Islam teaches that Allah is oft-returning with Compassion and Merciful. It is the great Mercy of Allah which envelops all and leads to salvation. In the Holy Qur'an Allah says:

“And whoso does evil or wrongs his soul, and then asks forgiveness of Allah, will surely find Allah Most Forgiving, Merciful.” Al-Nisa Chapter 4, Verse 111

Islam is unique in its dealing with ‘how to get rid of sin.’ It takes two approaches which are comprehensive in nature. First, it prescribes Istaghfar which means ‘prayer for forgiveness’ before a sin is committed. Secondly, it prescribes Tauba which means ‘repentance.’

**I**staghfar is to guard oneself against sin to begin with. Humans slip time to time and are put in situations where they can choose to do good or evil. For them to choose good over evil, they can use Istaghfar for divine help. Allah, Who is All Knowing and All Powerful, is the Best Helper of all. Istaghfar symbolizes the inherent weakness in humans and the greatness and power of Allah. Through true and sincere Istaghfar, Allah not only washes away past sins but helps guard against future sins through His Grace and Mercy. It should be noted that great stress in Islam is laid upon safeguarding against sin, instead of a reactionary approach of how to get rid of sin after it is committed. This is a clear, distinct, and proactive approach explained in Islam. The Promised Messiah (Peace be on him) writes in Malfoozat (Vol. 4, p. 308) that the reason why fear of Allah should be inculcated in one’s heart is to guard against sin. If one fears Allah and is mindful of the consequence of a sinful action, one would never commit a sin. It is like a thief knowing that the police is watching over all the time and even one small theft will lead to an instantaneous arrest. Such a thief will never steal, and cease to exist as a thief. Similarly, sin will cease to exist in the life of someone who truly fears Allah. This fear of Allah leads to Taqwa (Righteousness).

Tauba is more specific repentance of a particular sin. It requires the highest level of awareness and great remorse of a committed sin. Tauba is also known as returning back to Allah. Sincere Tauba washes away all sin. A Hadith by Hazrat Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the state of a person who repents of his sins is of a person who never committed that sin. This is also related in a story which signifies Islam’s prescription of how to get rid of sin.

It is related in a story that once a man committed many atrocities and murders.

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He had committed 99 murders when he felt great remorse for his actions. He wanted to seek forgiveness or find out ways to get rid of the great sins he had committed. In a state of complete restlessness he sought the advice of a wise man in hopes that the wise man will guide and help him. He asked the wise man if God will accept the repentance of a man who had committed 99 murders and forgive his sins. The wise man replied, “Forgiveness and repentance of such a man will never be accepted by God.” Upon hearing this, the murderer felt great disappointment, and animal faculties overtook him and he murdered the wise man. Now he had committed 100 murders. He felt even more remorse and restless,

yet he wanted to repent and seek forgiveness of his sins. Therefore, he sought after the advice of another wise man. This wise man told him that true repentance will wash away his sins and would earn God’s forgiveness. Upon hearing this the man was happy. The wise man also told him to move away from where he had committed all the murders and move to another city and live among pious people. He immediately took upon this journey, but was met with death before he could reach his destination. The Angel of Goodness wanted his soul to be in Paradise because of his repentance, while the Angel of Punishment wanted his soul to be in Hell on account of murders committed by him. This matter was brought before God, and God asked the two angels to measure the distance between the source and destination of this man. If he is closer to the source then put him in Hell and if he is closer to the destination then put him in Heaven. When the measurements were made, the man was closer to his destination and his soul was put in Paradise. It is said that God made him closer to the destination as God had accepted his repentance and forgiven his sins. There are two fundamental principles taught by this story. One, that sincere intention and action is required to get rid of sin. Second, God is ever Merciful and even forgives sins as grievous as a hundred murders, provided there is a true repentance.

**A**ll religions have provided ways to get rid of sin. Many are common among them, but Islam incorporates all of the means prescribed by earlier religions. To get rid of sin, solid determination and complete faith in Allah is needed. Determination combined with sincere prayers of help from Allah will ward off all sin. Without this all efforts and remedies are ineffective. ■

**Waqas Malik** belongs to a small village by the name of Dulmial, situated near the city of Chakwal, Pakistan. He was born in an Ahmadi family and received his early education in the Middle East. His family then moved to Pakistan where he started his professional studies in Computer Engineering. He came to the United States through a student exchange program and graduated from Iowa State University. Currently he is part of the Seattle Chapter in the Pacific Northwest region.



# "Fajr Adhaan"

## Poetry Corner

### The Muslim Call to Morning Prayer

By R. Earl Barclay

*Allaho Akbar!*

*God is the greatest of all!*

*The dawn is rising in the East,*

*With golden flag unfurled,*

*Gilds dome and arch and minaret,*

*Paints home and grove and parapet*

*Of all the Moslem World.*

*La-ilaha il-Allah!*

*To God Alone is worship given!*

*Upon the towering minaret,*

*The Muezzin stands out*

*Above the Mosque in the city square,*

*Sends forth the morning call to prayer,*

*Along deserted streets.*

*Muhammadur Rasul-ullah!*

*Muhammad is God's Prophet!*

*On couch of silk and bed of sand,*

*The Faithful hear the call; And shaking from their eyes the sleep,*

*The rich, the poor, the strong, the weak,*

*All heed the call to prayer.*

*Haya alas-Salah*

*Come to Prayer!*

*The beggar in his door-way stirs,*

*The rich man rises too.*

*Forgetful now of slumber sweet,*

*They fill each avenue and street.*

*It is the hour of prayer.*

*Haya alal-Falah!*

*Come to Success!*

*Beneath the mosque's high lifting dome,*

*They kneel in humble prayer:*

*Before the tasks of everyday,*

*The faithful bow to God and pray.*

*The morning hour of prayer.*

*Allah-o-Akbar!*

*God is the greatest of all!*

*Each of the Faithful kneeling there,*

*Knows the power of God*

*To smooth the way, make sweet the hours,*

*To give success or fame or powers*

*To faithful hearts in prayer.*

*La-ilaha-il-Allah!*

*None may be worshipped but God!*

*More musical than clarion bells,*

*Or Angelus at eve,*

*Or temple bells of Manadalay,*

*Or whanging gong of all Cathay,*

*The Moslem call to prayer.*

# From the Archives:

The Muslim Sunrise, Dec., 1930

## Sense About Islam

By Alois S. Kanpp  
(Muhammad Basheer)

**T**o the average European, or American, a follower of Islam is regarded to be a blind unreasoning fanatic who in his delusion follows a discredited religion of a decaying people. Such superficial observers remind one of the English parson who gave a sermon on religion. He started out by saying that any religion that was not Christian was not worth talking about, and therefore he would talk about the religion of Jesus. Further he said that there was no Christianity in the religion of Rome, and therefore he, when talking about Christianity, wanted it distinctly understood that he meant the Protestant religion. And finally he maintained that the only sound expression of Protestantism was in the Church of England. Therefore, to him religion meant just the Church of England, nothing more, nothing less. Any religion outside that was merely misnamed as religion.



**I** often wonder how many people in the Western World today realize that Islam contains much more of the true teachings of Jesus than Christianity does. The Christian churches of today have little to say about the Prophet Jesus, the Son of Man, as he constantly called himself, but most of their religion is derived from Paul. Go to most any Protestant church and listen to a sermon, and you will note that the preacher will say "Paul" ten times before he says "Jesus" just once. Most of our so-called Christianity should be called "Paulanity."

Now Paul never saw Jesus, and what is much more serious than that, he never entered into the spirit of Jesus. Paul was a militant crusader, devoid of all the love and kindness toward all mankind of his master. His brilliant eloquence about things that he did not understand, his almost insane attitude toward women makes it sometimes hard to understand for the earnest student how he ever could have been taken so seriously. All the bloodshed of the Christian church after Constantine, the tragic buffoonery of the Middle Ages, and modern unchristian attitude in the church can be understood and explained by the teachings of Paul. Catholicism is truly the religion of Peter, and Protestantism the religion of Paul.

What we call modern science in the Western World is only a little over a hundred years old. And even then the proph-

ets of science and progress had to battle the combined forces of ignorance and superstition that thundered and raved under the banner of Christianity. Truly, the misguided religious zeal of the Crusades and the Inquisition did all it could to push man back once more toward the state of barbarism and perhaps even cannibalism from which he had emerged thousands of years before. The kings of Europe, who gave all their aid to the Crusaders against the Saracens of Spain and to the insane exploits in the Holy Land, frequently had in their courts good Moslems as physicians and astronomers, because science and learning was extinct among the Christians. The term Algebra, Chemistry, or Alchemy show that these sciences came from Arabia. The Moslems calculated the procession of the equinoxes while Christianity was concerned with the question of how many angels could dance around the point of a needle and like edifying subjects. Gerbert, Archbishop of Reims, who later became Pope under the name of Sylvester II, a man, remarkable for his learning, so far ahead of his time that he was accused of witchcraft by his own church, had been a student at the Moslem university at Cordova. He was later called the greatest scholar of his age. His papacy lasted only four years, from 999 to 1003.

Islam means Peace, and the greeting of a Moslem is "Assalamo Alaikum," Peace

with you! If the Christians had a similar greeting wars would be less frequent. The Catholic Church uses such a greeting only in the mass of the bishop "Pax Vobiscum" but it is restricted to this ceremony and not in the language of the people, most of whom do not know the meaning of this salutation.

Slavery has been virtually abolished by the founder of Islam who directed that any slave can buy his freedom by becoming a Moslem, for no professor of the faith may hold a coreligionist in slavery. Muhammad himself set the example by liberating his own slaves of whom there were many. It is well to remember that this happened more than twelve hundred years before Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the emancipation of the Negro slavery in Christian America. We also must not forget that Christianity has done really nothing toward breaking the bonds of the Ne-

gro slave and that all slaves were Christians, made to be in some way, and the owners were not too particular how this was accomplished.

The evil of strong drink was recognized and dealt with by Muhammad and once for all abolished. No man may be a Moslem and use strong drink. A drunkard is unknown in countries where Islam is the prevailing religion. Of the five hundred millions of Moslems very few have ever tasted alcoholic liquor. The only moderation to him is total abstinence for the individual and prohibition for the state. How many of us wish that we could send some of the editors of our truth distorting newspapers to some Islamic country to take lessons on the result of prohibition.

The teachings of Jesus were the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man and includes all of the principles

that make man happier and freer and more easily able to attain spiritual evolution and the religion of Muhammad is precisely the same. But Christianity has traveled further in terms of time, and being of an eastern origin has been misunderstood and perverted by Western minds. If Christianity were to be founded at this time and in our part of the globe, it would not be so misinterpreted, although Jesus would probably be crucified again by the very people who profess to be his followers. Islam is a newer religion by about six hundred years and what's more it is today largely and principally confessed by peoples and races that can understand the language of the Prophet and are familiar with the oriental flowery metaphors of religious teachers. For these reasons Islam has preserved much more of the original teachings of its founder than Christianity.■



**A**ishah describes his (*The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>*) bedding as a sack of hide filled with leaves. She says: " We never ate bread made of wheat for three consecutive days. There were times when months would pass and we did not eat meat or bread, instead filled our bellies with dates and some milk, except for an odd present when someone would slaughter a sheep and send us a piece of meat."

*Umar narrates: "I went into a small room which was occupied by the Holy Founder of Islam. He was lying on a straw bedding so rough in nature that on the side he was leaning, I saw straw marks all over his body. I scanned the room and it was empty, there was nothing except for a small bucket for water and one or two odd things. I knew him to be the most beloved of God, a person who had reached the summit of humanity. This contrast so overwhelmed me with sorrow that I started to cry." The Holy Prophet turned to me and said: "Umar, what has ailed thee?" I said: "O Messenger of God, God loves you so much, you are the best ever created by Him, yet I see you in this state of extreme austerity. You don't have proper bedding, you don't have any articles to decorate your house, there is nothing." The Holy Prophet smiled and said: "Umar, would you prefer worldly things of this life to what is in store for us by God in the life to come?" Umar replied: "Surely the things to come will be better".*



# Did the Prophets of God Commit Sins?

By Shahina Bashir

## What is sin?

According to the Oxford dictionary, “sin” means, “breaking of divine or moral law, especially by a conscious act.” Sins and mistakes are not synonymous. Humans are fallible and prone to make mistakes. A mistake is described as an error which is not intentional. The actions of men are judged by their intentions.

Keeping the dictionary meaning of the word “sin” in context, we can now attempt to answer the question: “Did the prophets of God commit sins?”

## Who is a Prophet?

Before we can answer if prophets of God committed sins, we need to identify the persons appointed by God as guides for mankind. That is, what kind of life did they lead and what kind of character did they possess? The men whom God appointed to such a high office must have led blameless lives free from moral weakness. They should be the flag bearers of high moral standards that are incomparable with other men around them. The prophets were no doubt ordinary humans and possessed no divinity. However, they reflected the divine attributes. They exhibited sublime qualities that served as a paragon of morality for their followers. How else could the prophets lead people from darkness to light if they too were buried in ignorance?

## The Testimony of The Holy Qur'an

The Muslims hold the Qur'an as the direct word of God. Thus, it is the best source to tell us about the sinless nature of the prophets. The Qur'an clearly states that prophets cannot be disobedient to God: “And We sent no Messenger before thee but We revealed to him: ‘There is



no god but I; so worship Me alone. And they say, ‘The Gracious God has taken to Himself a son.’ Holy is He. Nay, those whom they so designate are only His honored servants: They speak not before He speaks, and they only carry out His commands” (21: 26-28). In another place the Qur'an states: “And it is not possible for a prophet to act dishonestly...” (3: 162). These verses clearly demonstrate the actions of the prophets which leave them free from conscious and willful disobedience to God.

The Qur'an speaks of individual prophets with the highest praise. One prophet has been referred to as Siddiq (the one who never lies), another has been said to be purified by God and was brought up in Divine presence, and yet another is described as one with whom God was well pleased. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was called Sa-diq and Amin, which means truthful and trustworthy, respectively. Thus, we can see from the testimony of the Qur'an that the prophets of God were sinless individuals.

## The Testimony of The Holy Bible

The Christians believe in the doctrine

*Despite the concept of original sin and atonement, the Bible frequently describes the prophets of God as sinless individuals. With regard to Noah, the Bible states, “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9).*

*Regarding Abraham it states, “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless” (Genesis 17:1).*

of original sin. They believe that it was Adam's disobedience to God which made him lose his place in the Garden of Eden. Humankind is considered sinful regardless of how hard one works to earn the pleasure of God. The Christian doctrine of atonement rejects the Quranic teachings about the sinlessness of the prophets. Christians view Jesus Christ as the only sinless human being. If there were humans other than Jesus who were also sinless, then the doctrine of atonement would lose its significance. Therefore, according to Christians, prophets of God had to be sinful people whose salvation would depend on the blood of Christ.

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individuals. With regard to Noah, the Bible states, "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). Regarding Abraham it states, "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless'" (Genesis 17:1).

## Misunderstood words

Questioning the Holy Qur'an, some critics have misunderstood certain Arabic words, resulting in the mistaken conclusion that the Qur'an does not support the concept of sinless prophets. The most important of these words is istighfar. The general meaning of the word istighfar is "seeking forgiveness of sins." However, this is not the only meaning of the word. It also means seeking protection from sin. We have already established that the Qur'an testifies to the sinless nature of prophets. Thus, the word istighfar when used in reference to prophets could only mean seeking protection from sins. Since prophets too are fallible, they need Divine protection to remain sinless.

The second misunderstood word is dhanb, which generally means "sin." However, this word has a wide range of meanings -- it can be applied to shortcomings and weaknesses. A prophet of God and other righteous men are never satisfied with their deeds and actions to the point they always strive to do better. This understanding of the word ensures that a person remains humble in the eyes of God.

Another word that is at times misunderstood is khata-. This word denotes all unintended actions, mistakes, and errors of judgment. When used in the context of prophets, this word does not imply sinfulness.

## Accusations Against Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>

Critics of Islam constantly launch allegations against the Prophet Muhammad

*To say that the prophets of God committed sins is tantamount to disbelief. They are men of lofty character and are far above the ordinary human in spiritual status. They are, however, not divine and are subject to human weaknesses. Yet, they are the chosen few protected from willful disobedience to God. If the prophets of God made any unintentional mistakes, they were immediately forgiven by God.*

and have labeled him a sinner. The verse often referenced for such accusations is found in Surah Al-Mu'min (40:56): "So have patience. Surely, the promise of Allah is true. And ask forgiveness for them for the wrongs they have done thee and glorify thy Lord with His praise in the evening and in the morning." Since critics misunderstand "dhanb," they immediately and incorrectly conclude that Prophet Muhammad sought forgiveness from God for the sins which he committed.

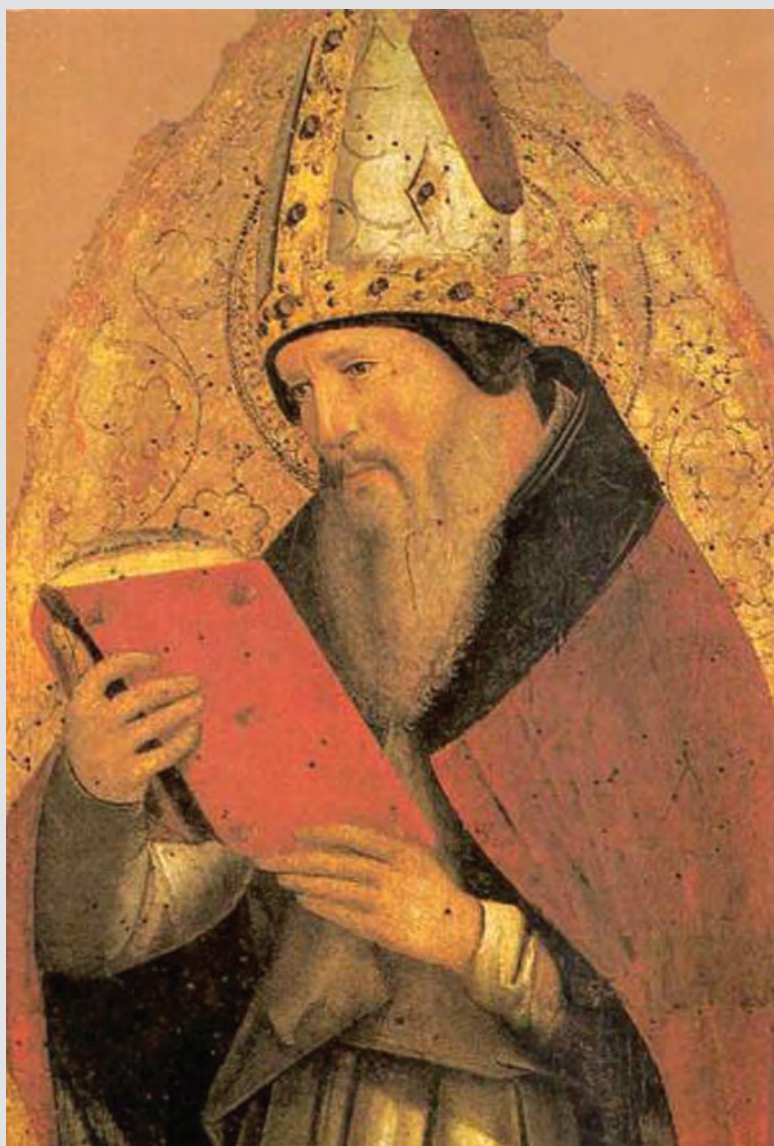
## Conclusion

To say that the prophets of God committed sins is tantamount to disbelief. They are men of lofty character and are far above the ordinary human in spiritual status. They are, however, not divine and are subject to human weaknesses. Yet, they are the chosen few protected from willful disobedience to God. If the prophets of God made any unintentional mistakes, they were immediately forgiven by God. The Holy Bible's reference to Adam's disobedience to God and his banishment from the Garden of Eden is refuted in the Qur'an where it states, "And We said, 'O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the garden, and eat therefrom plentifully wherever you will, but approach not this tree, lest you be of the wrongdoers. But Satan caused them both to slip by means of it and drove them out of the state in which they were. And We said, Go forth hence; some of you are enemies of others and for you there is an abode in the earth and a provision for a time. Then Adam learnt from his Lord certain words of prayer. So He turned towards him with mercy. Surely, He is Oft-Returning with compassion, and is Merciful'" (2:36-38).

The testimony of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Bible, and clarification of certain Arabic words referring to 'forgiveness' leave little doubt regarding the morals of God's prophets. The answer is obvious: the prophets of God did not commit sins.

*Shahina Bashir heads the Aleem Academy, a private Muslim school. She resides in Maryland.*





**St. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo Regius, is revered for his defense of Original Sin**

# Original Sin

## Does the Bible Teach that All are Born Sinful?

**By Naser-ud-Din Shams**

**O**riginal Sin is the Christian belief that all human beings are born sinful.

As the story goes in the Book of Genesis, the first man Adam<sup>as</sup> and his wife Eve were created sinless and placed in the Garden of Eden. However, a serpent tempted Eve into eating the forbidden fruit of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," and sharing it with Adam<sup>as</sup>. Consequently, God condemned the two and expelled them from Eden. All children born thereafter inherited this sin, sentencing them to eternal damnation. The only way to cleanse oneself of this sin would be to accept Jesus Christ's sacrificial atonement on the cross to pay the penalty of that sin. This is symbolically represented when children are baptized.

This belief is fundamental to mainstream Christianity and is deeply engrained in the Christian mind. However, it has seldom been evaluated against the teachings in the Bible. Such an evaluation reveals a questionable origin and debatable authenticity of the doctrine.

## History & Background

The formal doctrine of Original Sin is largely accredited to St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD). In rebuttal to the beliefs of Pelagius, a contemporary ascetic, Augustine claimed that unbaptized infants go to hell as a result of Adam's sin. Augustine's writings framed the foundation of Original Sin and were accepted as official doctrine in the Councils of Carthage (418AD), Orange (529AD) and Trent (1545-1563AD). On the other hand, nothing remains of Pelagius' writings except what his adversaries wrote of him.

Along with Pelagius, others rejected the concept of Original Sin. Theodorus (c.350 – 428AD), the bishop of Mopsuestia, denied that Adam's sin was the source of death. In harmony with this view, Caelestius (c.400AD) held that Adam's actions did not affect the entire human race.

Other critics of Augustine's views point out his influence by Manichaeism, his faith before he accepted Christianity. Manichaeism originated in Persia, founded by a man named Mani, and entertains the belief that human nature is evil. It is alleged that Augustine formulated his views of Original Sin under the influence of Manichaean beliefs.

In rebuttal, defenders of Original Sin claim its existence far before Augustine. They cite Paul where he writes, "...just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). They also cite the practice of infant baptism conducted before Augustine's time. As agreed in the Council of Nicaea (325AD), baptism was performed for the remission of sins.

## Jesus<sup>as</sup> & the New Testament

Amidst the confusion and finger-pointing, it is unusually surprising why no one seems to be asking what Jesus<sup>as</sup> preached. If Jesus<sup>as</sup> was the Messiah, as is believed by all Christians, it was his responsibility to teach every doctrine fundamental to salva-

tion. It is highly unlikely that he would have ignored a belief as foundational as all men are born in sin – the only cleansing for which would be his sacrificial atonement. However, we find no mention of Original Sin in the words of Jesus<sup>as</sup>.

In addition, allowing Paul to author fundamental doctrines, or anyone else for that matter, is a serious trespass of Christ's authority. In Hebrews (12:2) Jesus<sup>as</sup> is referred to as the *author and finisher of our faith*. Therefore, all Christian teachings must be rooted in the words of Jesus<sup>as</sup>. No one should have the authority to add or override any of his teachings.

Quite contrary to the belief that all men are sinful, we find several exceptions in the four Gospels. Jesus<sup>as</sup> is quoted as saying, "...the righteous [will go] to eternal life" (Matt 25:46). He also says, "...I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mrk 2:17). These verses indicate that the righteous (Greek: *Dikaïos*) are sinless because they inherit eternal life and have no need of repentance of sins.

Several people are *righteous* (Greek: *Dikaïos*) or *holy* (Greek: *Agios*) in the New Testament, indicating they are sinless. The following are described as *righteous*: Abraham<sup>as</sup> (Gal 3:6), Noah<sup>as</sup> (Heb 11:7), Melchisadec (Heb 7:2), Lot<sup>as</sup> (II Peter 2:8), and Zachariah<sup>as</sup> and his wife Elizabeth<sup>ra</sup> (Luk 1:6). In fact, Jesus<sup>as</sup> himself condemns the scribes and Pharisees by saying, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matt 23:35). Here Jesus<sup>as</sup> calls Abel and all of the martyrs *righteous*.

John<sup>as</sup> the Baptist is described not only as *righteous*, but *holy* (Mrk 6:20) in the same way Jesus<sup>as</sup> is called *holy* in Luke 1:35. In fact, John<sup>as</sup> the Baptist was born sinless as he was filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb (Luk 1:15). In addition, all of the prophets<sup>as</sup> since creation are called *holy* in Luke 1:70.

## The Old Testament

The Old Testament also seems to disagree with the concept of Original Sin. Like several similar verses, Ezekiel 18:20 states, "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the right-

eousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself."

If God revealed the above words to Ezekiel<sup>as</sup>, then Original Sin stands in contradiction to His words. Thus, Jews do not believe in Original Sin.

Although there are several verses in the Old Testament that indicate all men are sinful or have sinned, this is understood as hyperbole to express man's unworthiness before the Face of God (e.g. Ps 130:3, Jb 4:17, Ecc 7:20, etc.). Figurative statements abound throughout the Old Testament.

Similarly, Jesus<sup>as</sup> used exaggerated expressions of humility. For example, in the Gospel of Mark, a rich young ruler addressed Jesus as Good Teacher, but Jesus<sup>as</sup> responded, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God Alone" (10:18).

## Other Points

Original Sin gives rise to more questions than clarity. For example, if Adam's sin caused physical death (Romans 5:12), man to toil upon land (Gen 3:17), and women to bear children in pain (Gen 3:16), then accepting Jesus' sacrificial atonement to pay for the penalty of sin should eliminate these conditions. However, all Christians are subjected to all three.

Other questions involve the status of Mary<sup>ra</sup>, the mother of Jesus<sup>as</sup>, and Jesus<sup>as</sup> himself. If sin was hereditary, as the doctrine of Original Sin alleges, then how could Mary<sup>ra</sup> avoid it? She would have inherited it from the bloodline of her forefathers. Further, if Jesus<sup>as</sup> was sinless, then what need was there for him to be baptized by John<sup>as</sup> the Baptist?

## Conclusion

Although the author of Original Sin is not clear, the New Testament bears out it was not Jesus<sup>as</sup>. He never preached the doctrine. We also find several verses in the Old Testament which contradict it in principle.

Original Sin is one of many examples of mainstream Christian teachings which have questionable foundations. The fact it was never taught by Jesus Christ<sup>as</sup>, the very man after whom the Christian faith was named, does little more than beg skepticism.■



# My Sin is Your Virtue

By Allison Khan

**R**eligion teaches morals that guard against wrong thinking and wrong doing. Believing in a moral code should elevate us, if we are sincere in our belief. Most religions of the world agree on basic moral values: treat your family well, take care of your neighbors, be kind to animals and give charity to those in need. These values improve the quality of life within the community. When we help our neighbor, we increase his love for us, but more importantly we improve everyone's quality of life.

When we learn about other religions, there are some differences that stand out in black and white contrast to the beliefs we have been taught all our lives. One religion acclaims an act as a virtue, while another religion views it as a sin. How is this possible when all religions share the same Source - God?

For example, in Islam, cleanliness is considered extremely important. The Qur'an and hadith tell us how to do *wudhu* (cleansing) before each prayer. If we pray five times a day, then we are washing five times a day. When we go to the mosque, the hadith, or the sayings of the Holy Prophet <sup>sa</sup>, instruct us to be clean for *jumuah*, the congregational Friday prayer. We are instructed to wear perfume so that we smell nice. The Holy Prophet <sup>sa</sup> is reported to have said the Friday prayer is greater than *Eid*, which illustrates how important this prayer is in the life of a Muslim. To make sure that the atmosphere at the mosque is pleasant, we are told not to eat onions and garlic before we go, so that those saying their prayers next to us aren't turned away by unattractive odors.

One teacher colleague told me that when he taught in Thailand, he could smell soap everywhere in the marketplace when the people were going to the mosque for Friday prayers. He made the Muslims of Thailand sound so attractive to me. I could see the mosque, hear the *adhaan* calling everyone to prayer, as they walked to the mosque in clean clothes, smelling of soap.

Christians have a saying that “cleanliness is next to godliness,” but I have never heard anyone say that all the Christians smell clean on Sunday. The reason is because Islam is more prescriptive. The Bible does not tell all adherents of Christianity that they must be clean for worship. If there is no requirement, then how can the requirement be fulfilled?

Louis XIV, the king of France, a Catholic, is famous for his antipathy to cleanliness. He had a total of three baths in his entire life. One was for his coronation. Well, we know for certain that he could afford a bath, as a king, but his religion did not demand it of him, so it was not his habit to bathe. What was the effect on his soul that he should live for years, unwashed?

Islam is so particular about cleanliness for prayers that it is said that if the imam is not clean, then the prayers of those who follow him will have their prayers answered by Allah. Islam is very clear about the habits of the believers: for example, if a person praying passes gas, he must return to the washroom and do his *wudhu* again. Allah’s requirement is clearly directing believers to strive to the highest levels of physical cleanliness in their efforts to attain the highest level of spiritual cleanliness.

In stark contrast to Islam, Hindus believe that the cow is holy, and therefore anything produced by the cow has purifying qualities. Julian West, in New Dehli, wrote an article called *A gift from the gods: bottled cow’s urine*. This is not some ancient belief, handed down by uneducated people. It was written in 2002. According to the article, “the urine, which is being sold under the label ‘Gift of the Cow’, is being...promoted by the government of Gujarat.” This act is a virtue in Hinduism, although other religions would differ.

Some Hindus believe in the curative power of the urine so much that one woman claimed to drink cow’s urine for three years and claimed it cured her chest tumor.

The Hindus have saved mistreated cows, which is admirable, and it is their urine and dung that are used in “medicinal” lotions

and cake soaps. The Hindus have so much faith in the holiness of the cow that the supply outstrips the demand, according to Julian West. As a result, a book on cow’s urine and cow dung is posted on the internet describing how to make your own cow dung medicine, by adding water and squishing it together by hand and if that is not sufficient, add more water and leave it to ferment for another six hours and then squeeze the dung again to get more curative value from the dung available.

Another belief conflicting with my own is the Trinity. Christians who learn about Islam are confused why Muslims view the Trinity as a sin.

The Holy Qur’an proclaims the Oneness of Allah.

Growing up Christian, I was taught the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. All accounts were supported by the use of triads. There were three sons, three trials, three princesses or three witches in all the fairy tales. The storytelling tradition always uses three examples to support the argument. Christians include *Trinity* in church and street names, and hail it as the unifying symbol of Christianity.

How can two religions who claim to believe in the same prophets: Abraham<sup>as</sup>, Isaac<sup>as</sup>, Moses<sup>as</sup> and Noah<sup>as</sup> have such different views?

Islam states emphatically *Laa ilaha il-Allah* —“There is no god but the One God.” Judaism, which is based on the Old Testament also adheres to the Oneness of God. So how could a religion that comes after Judaism and before Islam believe God is three?

Trinity is a sin in Islam because the Holy Qur’an tells us that associating partners with Allah is a sin. Allah can forgive anything He chooses, but the only sin He will not forgive is associating partners with Him.

The Bible says “I am a Jealous God.” What should God be jealous of? Everything belongs to Him. The only thing He could be jealous of is if man begins to say that He shares His powers with someone else.

The Wiccans are modern day witches. They believe they follow the ways of an earlier time—the Celts. They believe in a God and a Goddess. Again, Islam would say that their idea of a virtue—giving God a partner as if He was a human who suffers bouts of loneliness—is a sin in Islam.

The third tenet of the Wiccans states, “We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than that apparent to the average person...it is sometimes called supernatural.”

In Islam, believing that you are powerful on a level with your Creator is a sin. Allah is Omnipotent—the All Powerful. The prayers of the prophets are antithetical to the Wiccan beliefs. We beg forgiveness from our Creator because He is the Master of the Day of Judgement.

What is the power of a man? As Freud pointed out, we are full of ego. No matter how insignificant our good qualities are, we tend to magnify them, because this is the mission statement of our ego. That is why Allah prescribes that we go into *sajdah*, by prostrating our heads onto the floor to subdue the ego that arises with very little encouragement. If we imagine Allah, the All Mighty standing in front of us while we pray, there is no room for ego or powerfulness. Rather, we are warned that we are each in charge of a kingdom and we should fear the day when we are held to account for that kingdom, because no one is perfect.

Islam is the only religion where a people of the Book have been given the ninety-nine names of Allah, which teaches us ninety-nine qualities of Allah. He is the Most High, the Most Powerful, the Most Beneficent. How foolish we look if we say we have the best hair or the best walk or even that we have the best job? How long are we walking on the earth for? We are insignificant. The gifts we have are all from Him. Consequently, the only intelligent response to our Maker is to give thanks.

All people who believe in their religion can achieve good things, but those who have the best teachings can achieve the most good. In this age, science clearly supports the Islamic requirement of washing repeatedly to avoid all the germs and the illnesses that result from not washing. Even though I grew up being told repeatedly about the Trinity, it did not make it comprehensible to me. Islam clarified the components of the Trinity by explaining that God is Allah, “the Son” is really a prophet or messenger and the Holy Ghost is Gabriel, the archangel who brings mankind revelation. Once we acknowledge that we are insignificant and sinful people, compared to the power and perfection of our Creator, there is a better chance that our prayers will become helpful to us and those around us. Follow your heart: follow the religion with the most spiritual knowledge.



# An Islamic ministry in jail

By Matthew Streib, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism

**W**AUKEGAN, IL.--It's 8:30 in the morning, and Hasan Hakeem, President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Zion, is pulling a tan suit jacket from a plastic sleeve in the trunk of his van.

"You can't dress casually if you want them to respect you," he says. "Now, if I showed up in a t-shirt, they would think I was sick or something." He is focused, in a quiet hurry to enter the Lake County Jail.

As Hakeem walks through the front doors, however, he slows down markedly. He jokes with the guards, chats with other chaplains, says hello to folks in the administration. When moving from room to room, he makes a point of not pushing the button that alerts the guards that he needs them to open the doors.

"They can see me on the video," he says, giving a small wave to a camera. "They have a lot to do. I don't want to annoy them. This is their house, I have to respect that, and be as respectful as I can."

Hakeem has made it his mission to change the way inmates at the jail view the world and themselves, removing them from the negative way of life learned on the street.

But his ministry doesn't stop with inmates in jail. He and his community at the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in Zion, Ill. embrace them in the community after they are released.

Hakeem is proving that the Muslim faith



**Lake County Jail Chaplain** Hasan Hakeem with inmate, John Blair, who converted to the Islamic faith during his incarceration. Blair was one of several inmates who participated in a 30-day fast during the Holy Month of Ramadhan last year.

Photo by Matthew Streib/Lake County Jail, Waukegan, IL

can be a powerful tool for rehabilitation at a time when Islam's presence in the penal system is under scrutiny.

**B e f o r e** Hakeem, the Lake County Jail hadn't had a Muslim chaplain in almost a decade, largely because there were few Muslim inmates. But early this year, when some inmates said they were Muslim, the jail called Hakeem, who was initially reluctant.

"I hate jails, I still do," he says. "If you told me 10 years ago I'd be working in the jail, I'd have called you a liar. But I changed my perspective on incarceration and what leads to a person being incarcerated and how to save them because my youngest son is incarcerated right now because of some stupidity that he had."

His son is being held on charges related to armed robbery.

"Sometimes I'm there three, four days a week," he says. "I just get this feeling that they need me, and I'm there. If I can't go, I start to feel guilty, as though I've failed someone."

He spends as much time at the jail and dealing with inmates' families as a full-time job, but it isn't a job. Hakeem isn't paid, and still manages to juggle his responsibilities as an imam and a freelance writer on the side.

About six months ago, Hakeem met with inmates as a traditional visitor would — with a large sheet of Plexiglas dividing them. But Hakeem decided that if he were actually going to have an impact on these people's lives, he'd have to see them face-to-face.

So he told the jail's administration that if he were to continue guiding inmates, he would have to have free movement throughout the jail, as chaplains are generally afforded.

By the jail's policy, Hakeem must visit between meal times, often affording him as little as 90 minutes, so he never gets to everyone he needs to see. He doesn't seek out new inmates to talk to, as he says conversion is not his mission.

Nevertheless, his reputation for humility



and empathy has spread throughout the prison. When he walks into a cell block, inmates crowd around him as if he were a celebrity, shaking his hand and bumping fists to say hello. In the few months that he has been there, about 20 have accepted Islam as their faith. The jail holds about 700 inmates.

Since 9/11, Islam's place in prisons has been under increased scrutiny, as many have worried that its spread could allow for the infiltration of radical ideologies.

For example, in September 2006, the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held hearings in which the FBI and Homeland Security urged prison officials to conduct more extensive background checks on workers and volunteers who meet with inmates. Members of Congress are also looking at possible reforms in prison security as a way to combat the spread of extremist Islamic beliefs.

Because of this, many prisons have been hesitant to hire new Muslim chaplains, fearing liability issues.

Nevertheless, Lake County Jail Chief Warden Jennifer Witherspoon says that Hakeem has been an invaluable resource. "He doesn't just limit himself to speaking to the Muslims; he transcends that," she says. "He brings knowledge and experience to the younger guys and the older guys can relate to him because of his age. If anyone had a stereotype of a Muslim as being violent or radical, he's shattered it."

Hakeem sees his work as part of a larger mission to combat what he characterizes as the growing threat of society's bottom class.

"We've been ignoring the underbelly of society for too long," he says. "This gang problem is deeper than al-Qaeda and all that stuff we talk about. There are people out there who have nothing to lose and have no fear. They're a real terrorist threat to our country, and they're mobilizing. We can't just lock them up and forget about them anymore. They come back. We've got to change how they think."

When Hakeem meets a new inmate, he doesn't ask why he is in jail. Hakeem says it's not the most important thing, and it will come out eventually. Instead, he discusses their feelings, their relationships, and where they are spiritually. He plans his visits accordingly, forming a mental schedule about who he needs to visit.

On a recent visit he sat down with John Blair, who is awaiting trial for attempted murder and other violent charges.

Blair, 25, a recent convert to Islam from



***Lake County Jail Chief Warden Jennifer Witherspoon says that Hakeem has been an invaluable resource. "He doesn't just limit himself to speaking to the Muslims; he transcends that," she says. "He brings knowledge and experience to the younger guys and the older guys can relate to him because of his age. If anyone had a stereotype of a Muslim as being violent or radical, he's shattered it."***

Apostolic Christianity, had been hurting, as his grandmother, Betty, had said that she was preparing to die.

Blair, an imposing, muscular figure, was raised by the women in his family, and his chest and arms are covered in their names in homage. He wears a 'Betty' tattoo above his heart.

Hakeem sits close to Blair, leaning in attentively, his gaze unmoving, as though no one else existed in the world.

"Don't worry, we'll watch out for them," he tells Blair, placing a hand on his shoulder.

He hands Blair a Qur'an, one of 300 his mosque bought for the jail, and promises to come back soon.

When Hakeem says he'll provide more than just lending an ear, he means it.

He shows up at bond hearings and trials as a character witness, and if he can't go, he sends a member of his mosque. He acts as a liaison and a support for family members, helping them deal with having a family member in jail, and addressing their concerns of faith if the inmate became a Muslim. And on this day, before he arrived at the prison, Hakeem spent an hour with Blair's family, consoling them and conveying messages.

Hakeem also acts as an intermediary between them and the administration, being the inmates' voice and the administrations' evaluator for authenticity. "I've had it with people filing tons of grievances. I don't want to hear all that crap, you're in jail, you should be thinking about how to save your soul."

By taking authentic religious needs directly to the administration, he avoids bureaucracy, meets inmates' needs, and saves the administration paperwork.

But it's not only in jail that Hakeem reaches out to inmates. He has adopted a mantra from Christian prison groups: "Meet them at the Gate." When inmates are released, Hakeem makes sure that they are welcomed at his mosque. He and the congregation try to find work for them, places to stay, and job training, but his main goal is to watch their spiritual and moral development.

"A lot of people just say 'Get them jobs,' as though that'll fix everything. It has to be more than just a job. A job doesn't change a person; it just makes life more difficult for him. We've got to mentor them."

The Ahmadiyya mosque in Zion occupies a location that has been sentimental to the faith for a century. In the early 1900s, newspapers in the United States brandied the sensationalist drama of a zealot founder of a new Christian sect that formed Zion as a new Jerusalem.

The figurehead, John Alexander Dowie, was vehemently anti-Muslim. In response, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, an obscure Muslim cleric, who said he was the Messiah and Mahdi, from India, challenged him to a prayer duel. The first one to die was the one who was wrong.

Dowie died in March 9, 1907. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which grew from Ahmad's teachings, founded a mission in Chicago. The Ahmadi community in Zion has made a point in reaching out to the



community that spurned them a century ago. The Christian sect still survives, albeit under a new name.

The city's quality of life has fallen precipitously since the closing of its nuclear power plant, its main source of income, in 1998. Currently, about 12 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

In 1996, 15-year-old Ed Shimenti, Jr. was unfulfilled with his life in the impoverished city and was looking for an alternative to involvement in gangs. With a friend, he began attending mosques on Friday. His mother, Joni, says she was addicted to crack at the time, and that she thought he was just doing it to rebel.

"I thought he did it to get out of school early on Fridays," she says. "I did not support of him wearing that hat [a kufi] in the house or at school."

But Shimenti kept going, and made friends with the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam at 2103 Gabriel Ave. The community embraced him, and Hakeem personally took him under his wing. When Shimenti wanted to attend the international annual convention in Toronto, they dipped into their own pockets to fund his trip. In Canada, Shimenti met with the Ahmadi Khalifa (spiritual leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslims), a rare honor.

"[He was] a man with an aura of power, but was very meek and humble meeting with myself and members of the Zion mosque," says Shimenti.

Nevertheless, his mother, a devout Christian, fervently disapproved of Shimenti's interest in Islam, and refers to his visit to Canada as "brainwashing." Hakeem met with her, saying that given Shimenti's situation, it would probably be Islam or the streets.

Shimenti stopped attending the Ahmadi mosque. Shimenti is again turning to Islam to change his life, and Hakeem is again acting as his mentor.

By reaching out to former inmates, the community has been burned before, however. Once, Hakeem says, a former inmate was allowed to live inside the mosque. He was employed at a gas station owned by one of the mosque's members, and caught stealing from the cash register.

"It was a bad experiment, real bad," says Hakeem. Now, he says, some of the members do not approve of his reaching out to inmates, something he takes to

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## **"Remember that those first followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammed, (saw) were a small group of cast-outs."**

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heart. "It's difficult. We need to concern ourselves with how others feel. If they feel unsafe, we need to think about that very seriously and find how to make them feel safe. But this is something very important.

On Fridays, during services at the mosque, he frequently reminds his congregants of the importance of his work.

"Remember that those first followers

of the holy prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him, were a small group of cast-outs," he said at a recent service.

"We need to be a force of positive change in this world and see outside of ourselves. It's the people who are incarcerated, the people who are sick, the people who are cast-away. We have a responsibility to serve God and community. If we're going to serve the community, let's not give lip service — let's do it, let's be people of action."

Hakeem knows that not everyone can be rehabilitated, and he has chalked up a loss or two. But he refuses to give up. For people like Fareed Sharif, a former gang member who is now a reformed member of the mosque, knowing that someone believes in people like him is one of the things that most helped him turn his life around.

"This place is amazing," he says. "Hakeem helped me to know that there is One God, that he loves me, and that he cares what happens to me. Now, I am protecting my soul." ■



**Hakeem meets with two inmates, one African Hebrew and the other, a Muslim. It's important to be inclusive of all faiths, said Hakeem. "Christians, Moors and atheists attend our Friday Service in the Lake County Jail. "The pathway to salvation is not limited to Muslims."**

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# Saint Patrick's Day and the Christian Trinity

By Dr. Zia Shah

**S**aint Patrick's Day is annually celebrated, on March 17, the day on which Saint Patrick died. The day is a national holiday in Ireland. In Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, it is widely celebrated but is not an official holiday. All over the world we see the symbol of Saint Patrick and Trinity in the form of three leaflet shamrock on display.

It is said that Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated by both Christians and non-Christians by wearing green, eating Irish food and/or green foods, imbibing Irish drink, and attending parades. There is a saying that, "Everyone wants to be Irish on St. Patrick's Day."

The St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin, Ireland is part of a five-day festival; over 500,000 people attended the 2006 parade. The largest St. Patrick's Day parade is held in New York City and it is watched by two million spectators. As well



## St patrick's Day celeBRation

*Legend also credits Patrick with teaching the Irish about the concept of the Trinity by showing people the shamrock, a 3-leaved clover, using it to highlight the Christian belief of 'three divine persons in the one God' (as opposed to the Arian belief that was popular in Patrick's time).*

as being a celebration of Irish culture, Saint Patrick's Day is a Christian festival celebrated in the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, and some other denominations.

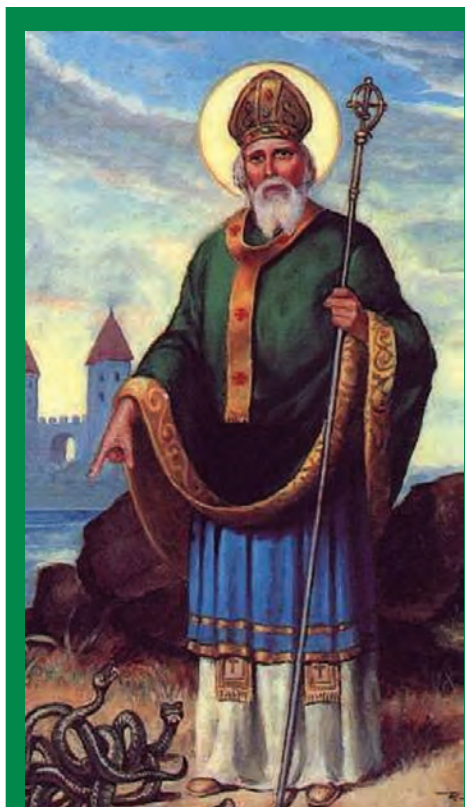
Saint Patrick introduced Christianity to Ireland. The

way he introduced Christianity to Irish people speaks volumes about missionary appeal. The best clue may lie in the national flower of Ireland, the shamrocks. Encyclopedia Wikipedia has the following to say about Saint Patrick:

“Pious legend credits Patrick with banishing snakes from the island, though post-glacial Ireland never actually had snakes; ..... Legend also credits Patrick with teaching the Irish about the concept of the Trinity by showing people the shamrock, a 3-leaved clover, using it to highlight the Christian belief of ‘three divine persons in the one God’ (as opposed to the Arian belief that was popular in Patrick’s time). Whether or not these legends are true, the very fact that there are so many legends about Patrick shows how important his ministry was to Ireland.”<sup>1</sup> Even if these legends are not true this universal display of shamrock serves to indoctrinate the gullible into Trinity. What we never see or hear is the fact that shamrock may also have four (4) leaflets:

The Encyclopedia Britannica online has the following to say on this issue: “Before the end of the 7th century Patrick had become a legendary figure, and the legends have continued to grow. One of these would have it that he drove the snakes of Ireland into the sea to their destruction. Another, probably the most popular, is that of the shamrock, which has him explain the concept of the Holy Trinity, three Persons in one God, to an unbeliever by showing him the three-leaved plant with one stalk. Today Irishmen wear shamrocks, the national flower of Ireland, in their lapels on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17.”<sup>2</sup>

We share the joy of cultural celebration with our Irish countrymen, but what we take an exception to is the ‘doctrine of Trinity’. The proofs of Trinity, in general lie in rhetoric, gimmicks and legends like the ones associated with Saint Patrick. If Christians were to offer any serious proofs for their claim of Trinity, those should have been focused on showing the testimony of three Gods in Laws of Nature and study of nature. In the words of Khalifatul Masih IV, regarding European Christian philosophers, “Kierkegaard is proved so right in his warning to the priests to maintain a sullen silence about the divine mystery of Trinity; rather than invite trouble by venturing to defend it with instruments of reason.”<sup>3</sup> But what Kierkegaard could not see is that, in this age of enlightenment, with millions of websites, it will be hard to hide behind the veil of ‘faith’ alone



*Before the end of the 7th century Patrick had become a legendary figure, and the legends have continued to grow. One of these would have it that he drove the snakes of Ireland into the sea to their destruction.*

and run away from reason and rationality. It is self evident that faith cannot be divorced from reason. If man needed faith alone, any cult would be as good as any religion and all human affairs will completely collapse. Therefore, let us subject the doctrine of Trinity to rational examination.

### Laws of Nature and Monotheism

In the words of Paul Davies, a Professor of Mathematical Physics and a prolific writer on the subject of ‘Science and Religion’, “The concept of the law of nature was not invented by any particular

philosopher or scientist. Although the idea was crystallized only in the modern scientific era, its origins go back to the dawn of history, and are intimately bound up with religion. Our distant ancestors must have had a rudimentary notion of cause and effect. The purpose of making tools, for example, has always been to facilitate the manipulation of the environment. .... Although certain regularities of behavior were apparent to these early people, the vast majority of natural phenomena remained mysterious and unpredictable.”<sup>4</sup>

From these early beginnings the systematic human observations began to grow. The pantheistic cultures of Hinduism or Buddhism believed that the physical world was a holistic tapestry of interdependent influences. According to this view God’s relationship with Nature is that of a partner rather than that of a sovereign. This holistic conceptualization did not yield to objective study of nature that required a degree of reductionism.

Set against this way of looking at the world were the monotheistic religions. Almost 2000 years BC, Allah revealed himself to the prophet Abraham and gave him a powerful message of Monotheism. As the teachings of Monotheism, got established in the Middle East, the Jews conceived of God as the Law-giver. This God being independent and separate from His creation, imposed laws upon the universe from without. Nature was supposed to be subject to laws by Divine decree.<sup>5</sup>

Sir Isaac Newton saw that there is no changing of the laws of nature and that the Universe follows the rules of mathematics. He published his Principia in 1687. But fifty years before Newton, Galileo Galilei had said, “The book of the universe is written in mathematical language, without which we wander in vain through the labyrinth.”<sup>6</sup> The scientists were borrowing from each other, until one could track it back to the teaching of Monotheism in the Holy Quran and the Torah. Allah Said in the verse of Sura Rum:

“So set thy face to the service of religion with single-minded devotion. And follow the nature made by Allah, the nature according to which He has fashioned mankind. There is no altering the creation

of Allah. That is the right religion - but most men know not.” (Al Rum 30:31)

According to Paul Davies, “In Renaissance Europe, the justification for what we today call the scientific approach to inquiry was the belief in a rational God whose created order could be discerned from a careful study of nature. Part of this belief came to be that God's laws were immutable.”<sup>7</sup> Scientific culture was dominated by adherence to the absolute invariance of laws of Nature, The laws of nature underwrote the meaningfulness of the, scientific enterprise and assured its success. To prove claim of Paul Davies, let me quote an example as mentioned by John Barrow , ‘In the absence of “the concept of a divine being who acted to

The Holy Quran says: Is He, then, Who creates like one who creates not? Will you not then take heed?<sup>16</sup> There is one theme in the creation of this universe be it living or non-living. In the living beings there is similar RNA and one kind of DNA. Theory of evolution ties all living beings to one ancestry or lineage.

Dr. Abdus Salam, the co-recipient with Steven Weinberg and Sheldon Lee Glashow of the 1979 Nobel Prize for Physics for their work in formulating the electroweak theory, which explains the unity of the weak nuclear force and electromagnetism, had inspiration of his work from his belief in Unity of God.<sup>17</sup>

“To a Muslim mystic, Allah is to be sought in eternal beauty. And for Salam,

the heavens and the earth other gods beside Allah, then surely both would have gone to ruin.”<sup>21</sup> And again it says, ‘nor is there any other god along with Him.’<sup>22</sup> These quotes imply that, had there been any other god besides the One Who combines in Himself all perfect attributes, both heaven and earth would have been corrupted. Since it was inevitable that at times this plurality of gods would have acted against one another, and their differences would have resulted plunging the universe into chaos, each one of them would have worked for the welfare of his own creation; for whose comfort, he would have considered it permissible to destroy others. This too would have led to chaos.”<sup>23</sup>


It is easy for unprejudiced who has not been indoctrinated with the concept of Trinity, to see that our Universe speaks of one Creator, call him Allah or by whatever name but there cannot be three creators of this world.<sup>24</sup>

### The Plant Kingdom

Who originates creation and then repeats it, and Who provides for you from the heaven and from the earth? Then is there a god besides Allah? Urge them: Bring forward your proofs if you are telling the truth.” (Al Naml 27:65)

Plants called shamrock include the wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) of the family Oxalidaceae, or any of various plants of the pea family (Fabaceae). As mentioned before, according to Irish legend, St. Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, first chose the shamrock as a symbol of the Trinity of the Christian church because of its three leaflets bound by a common stalk. Wood sorrel is shipped from Ireland to other countries in great quantity for St. Patrick's Day.<sup>25</sup>

It is common knowledge that leaves come in different styles, shapes and sizes. However, the vast majority of the leaves have a single leaf or leaflet. So if leaves were to serve as an argument for anything, they can only be an argument for One Supreme God. But what is a better argument for monotheism in Plant Kingdom is the fact that all plants have descended from one ancestry and have one kind of RNA. In plants RNA is the basis of genetics like DNA in the animal kingdom.



*St. Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, first chose the shamrock as a symbol of the Trinity of the Christian church because of its three leaflets bound by a common stalk.*

legislate what went on in the natural world, whose decrees formed inviolate 'laws' of Nature, and who underwrote scientific enterprise,’ Chinese science was condemned to a ‘curious stillbirth’.<sup>8</sup> There were certainly other factors in the development of science, but it cannot be denied that monotheism was a powerful necessary paradigm, for the budding flower of science to blossom.

After several centuries of scientific development, now when we look at our Universe, it can speak to us of only one Creator, call him Allah or by whatever name but there cannot be three creators of this world.<sup>9</sup> There are no creations of the Holy Ghost or of Jesus Christas that we can see.<sup>10 11 12</sup> We Muslims love Jesus Christ dearly and applaud him as a great prophet. But he did not create anything to merit a status equal to Allah All-Mighty.<sup>13 14 15</sup>

beauty comes through finding new, subtle, yet simplifying patterns in the natural world. Anything that threatens to confuse the issue seems to him ugly, filling him with an utmost physical revulsion and driving him to clean it away, much as one would remove mud from a shrine.”<sup>18</sup> The physicists are now working on a string theory that will unite all forms of matter and energy into one. If there had been in the heavens and the earth other gods besides Allah, then there would have been chaos in the Universe.<sup>19</sup> This is the fundamental nature of multiple egos and entities, with contradicting visions, struggling with each other.<sup>20</sup>

In the words of Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, “The Holy Quran sets forth an argument in support of His being One, without associate, by stating: “If there had been in



If there is a mystery in leaves, it is not in the number of leaflets in shamrock but is in the mechanisms that help leaves to seek light, it is in the molecule of chlorophyll and it is in the fact that the leaves make the food for the whole animal kingdom from very basic raw materials of carbon dioxide, water and few minerals, and cook the food, if you will, through the agency of sunlight.

If there is mystery and miracle in the plant kingdom, it lies in the interplay between the creation and the word of God. All Knowing God mentioned about His creations forcefully in the Holy Quran centuries before the invention of microscope that was needed to see the presence of pollens and sexes in flowers:

“Holy is Allah, Who created in pairs, of that which the earth grows, and of themselves, and of that which they know not.” (Al Yasin 36:37)

If there is mystery and miracle in the plant kingdom, it lies in the mechanisms that help water be sucked up from the roots to the leaves of Australian Mountain Ash trees up to 435 feet high.<sup>26</sup>

Incidentally, the Ahmadi Muslims believe that even miracles occur within the realms of ‘laws of nature’, whether those are known to us at present or not.

“This is the creation of Allah. Now show me what others besides Him have created. Nay, but the wrongdoers are in manifest error.”

(Al Luqman 31:12)

“Originator of the heaven and the earth! How can He have a son when He has no consort, and He has created everything and has full knowledge of all things?” (Al Anaam 6:102)

From the Human Genome project we know that each human being is coded by approximately 50,000 to 100,000 genes. They are spread over 46 chromosomes half of which one gets from ones mother and half from the father. To determine the paternity of any human being the conventional method is to study the genes of the individual and his or her parents. Whenever, there is a question or debate about paternity, the genes and the chromosomes are examined.

With this in mind, let us review the following analysis, about son ship of Jesus Christ, by Khalifatul Masih IV, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad in his book, “Christianity a Journey from Fact to Fiction”:

“First of all, let me remind you that the mother and father participate equally in producing a child. The cells of human beings contain 46 chromosomes, which carry the genes or character bearing threads of life. The ovum of a human mother possesses only 23 of the 46 chromosomes, which is half the number found in each man and woman. When the mother's ovum is ready and available for insemination, the other half of the chromosomes which it lacks, is provided by the male sperm, which then enters and fertilizes it. This is the design of God, otherwise, the number of chromosomes would begin to double with every generation. As a result the second generation would have 92 chromosomes; humans would soon be transformed into giants and the entire process of growth would run amok. God has so beautifully planned and designed the phenomenon of the survival of species that at productive levels of regenerative cells, chromosomes are halved in number. The mother's ovum contains 23 chromosomes and so does the father's sperm. As such, one can reasonably expect half the characters bearing genes of the child to be provided by the female and half by the male partner. This is the meaning of a literal son. There is no other definition of being a literal son which can be ascribed to any human birth. There are variations in the methodology of course, but there are no exceptions to the rules and principles just explained.

Focusing our attention on the birth of Jesus, let us build a scenario about what might have happened in his case. The first possibility, which can be scientifically considered, is that Mary's unfertilized ovum provided the 23 chromosomes as the mother's share in the forming of the embryo. That being so, the question would arise as to how the ovum was fertilized and where did the remaining 23 essential chromosomes come from? It is impossible to suggest that Jesus' cells had only 23 chromosomes. No human child can be born alive with even 45 chromosomes. Even if a human

being was deprived of a single chromosome out of the 46 necessary for the making of all human beings, the result would be something chaotic, if there was anything at all. Scientifically, Mary could not provide the 46 chromosomes alone,<sup>23</sup> had to come from somewhere else.

If God is the father then that presents several options. One; God also has the same chromosomes that humans have, and these must have been transferred somehow to the uterus of Mary. That is unbelievable and unacceptable; if God has the chromosomes of human beings it means he is no longer God. So as a consequence of belief in Jesus as the literal 'Son' of God, even the divinity of the Father is jeopardized.

The second possibility is that God created the extra chromosomes as a supernatural phenomenon of creation. In other words, they did not actually belong to the person of God, but were created miraculously. This would automatically lead us to reject Jesus' relationship to God as one of child and father, and would result in the all-embracing relationship of the Universe to God, that is, the relationship of every created being to its Creator.”<sup>27</sup>

No matter how hard we may try, there does not seem to be any way out of this riddle of paternity, except to exchange the doctrine of Trinity for the doctrine of Monotheism. We invite our Christian brethren to the common teaching of Monotheism which is in fact still clearly present not only in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament, as is reviewed in another article in this volume, Trinity: in the Holy Quran and the Bible. In the words of the Holy Quran, “Say to the people of the Book, ‘Let us agree upon one matter which is the same for you and for us, namely, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partner with Him.’” (Al Imran 3:65)

We invite our fellow Christian brethren to a pure concept of monotheism. Acceptance of this teaching will take away the fundamental conflict that exists between mainstream Christian doctrine and rationality. In the words of Jesus Christ, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32) Indeed, if we accept or yield to any truth, it guides us to greater and greater truth.

# The Muslim Sunrise

## Q&A

**Q** When the Holy Qur'an states, "O ye who believe! Obey God and obey the Prophet and obey those in authority from among you." (4:60), does this relate just to the Muslims in authority?

**A** The Arabic expression *in authority from among you* should not mislead anyone into thinking that loyalty is limited to Muslim authority. The verse teaches obedience to all authority over the communities we live in. *From among* (Arabic *min*) also means *over* or *of* or *in*. The verse teaches decorum and discipline in public policy and affairs. It makes loyalty to ruling authority an Islamic duty. Ruler and ruled are pictured in the verse as one group, and the verse identifies members of a community as either governed or governors. The governed owe allegiance and obedience to the governors. So long as Muslims enjoy the freedom to preach and practice their faith, it is irrelevant whether their governors are Muslim or not, and they must be obeyed to keep order within society.

The Promised Messiah, founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (on whom be peace), writing about the above verse states:

"The Holy Qur'an commands, 'Obey Allah and obey His Prophet and obey those in authority among you.' Believers are to obey those in authority, besides God and His Prophet. To say that 'those in authority' does not include a non-Muslim government would be a manifest error. For, a government or authority whose ordinances are in accordance with the Shariah (that is, they are not in conflict with it) is 'authority from among you.' Those who are not against us are among us. The Qur'an, therefore, is unequivocal on the point. Obedience to governmental authority is one of its imperatives." (Works and Speeches, Vol. (i), p. 261)

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) says:

"He who obeys me, obeys God; he who disobeys me disobeys God. He who obeys his authority obeys me; he who disobeys his authority disobeys me" (Muslim, Kitab-al-Imarah).

This *hadith* illustrates the concept of obedience. Loyalty and obedience belong, by right, only to God, the Creator, Master, and Lord of men and nations. Others derive their authority from Him. They reflect the Authority, which is God's. A Prophet is a vicegerent of God, a messenger, and bearer of divine ordinances. To obey a prophet is to obey God. Similarly, one who has authority among men is responsible for discipline and order among God's creatures, safeguarding the rights of citizens, and most importantly, his own conduct. Obedience to such a person is pleasing to God. In fact, it is obedience to God. Truly said the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, "Obedience to me is obedience to God, and obedience to authority is obedience to me."

**Q** Two countries, both with Ahmadi populations, go to war. Ahmadis in the two countries profess loyalty to their respective nations. What are Ahmadis to do in such a situation? Will they still side with their respective governments and engage in mutual killing?

**A** This question is not new - neither for us, nor the rest of the world. Our answer has always been this: Yes, even in such a situation, Ahmadis must remain loyal to their respective governments. This belief of ours is not of our making. It is a belief taught by God and explained by His Prophet. It is a belief we cannot alter nor dilute. If loyalty to respective governments results in the killing of Ahmadis by Ahmadis, it will be a natural consequence just as it was when Muslims engaged in wars against each other.

Obviously, Muslims should be active in pursuing the path of peace within the legally defined norms of their respective nations, but when these avenues fail and war is inevitable, Ahmadis must maintain loyalty to their nations. If citizens strongly protest wars, they can act within the legal channels of their countries to

**"Obedience to me is obedience to God, and obedience to authority is obedience to me."**

*Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>*

bring about change. However, if this is insufficient, then citizens may permanently leave their nation or suffer the legal ramifications for refusal to fight, such as imprisonment or fines.

Islam is a religion of principles. Principles have priority over persons. Persons may be sacrificed for the sake of principles - not principles for the sake of persons. When Muslims are in war against each other, as was the case during the Khilafat of Ali, both sides' casualties are considered martyrs.

True, Ahmadis owe spiritual allegiance to one leader or Imam. How, one may ask, can they be permitted to take part in mutual killing? The answer is again the same: The Ahmadi Imam is not a dictator or ruler who orders his followers as he pleases. The Ahmadi Imam, or Khalifa, is himself subject to Islamic Law, the Shariah. The Shariah is above the Khalifa, not the Khalifa above the Shariah. We may quote from the statement of the Second Khalifa, Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad:

"No Khalifa has the power to alter any of God's ordinances. The Khalifa is not a dictator. He is only a deputy. He is bound to carry out a law, to put through another's commands. He is subject to that law, those commands, as much as all the others in the fold." (al-Fazl, April 5, 1949)

We should remember that the Ahmadiyya Khilafat is a spiritual institution. It has and seeks no political power or statehood. Ahmadis seek to advance only by spiritual methods. They and their leader are content to live as loyal citizens under governments, which guarantee freedom in religious matters.

# Next-Gen Taliban

By NICHOLAS SCHMIDLE

**O**ne day last month, I climbed onto a crowded rooftop in Quetta, near Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, and wedged myself among men wearing thick turbans and rangy beards until I could find a seat. We converged on the rooftop that afternoon to



attend the opening ceremony for Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's campaign office in this dusty city in the south-western

province of Baluchistan. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, better known by its abbreviation, J.U.I., is a hard-line Islamist party, widely considered a political front for numerous jihadi organizations, including the Taliban. In the last parliamentary elections here, in 2002, the J.U.I. formed a national coalition with five other Islamist parties and led a campaign that was pro-Taliban, anti-American and spiked with promises to implement Shariah, or Islamic law. The alliance, known as the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, or M.M.A., won more than 10 percent of the popular vote nationwide — the highest share ever for an Islamist bloc in Pakistan. The alliance formed governments in two of the country's four provinces, including Baluchistan.

A cool breeze blew across the rooftop

If the government's version is cor-

rect, radical Islamists pressed their advantage to terrible effect in assassinating Benazir Bhutto during a rally on Dec. 27. Bhutto's family and her party clearly have no faith in the probity of President Pervez Musharraf's government, and many — including Nawaz Sharif, Bhutto's nearest rival in the Pakistani opposition — have accused the government of creating the security situation that led to her murder. Musharraf responded in a nationally televised speech on the evening of Jan. 2 by doubling his insistence that terrorists were responsible: "We need to fight terrorism with full force, and I think that if we don't succeed in the fight against terrorism, the future of Pakistan will be dark." Efforts at democratic integration by parties like the J.U.I. have now been overshadowed by the violence of their antidemocratic Islamist colleagues — a network of younger Taliban fighting on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border, jihadis pledging loyalty to Al Qaeda and any number of freelancing militants. Disrupting and discrediting democracy may, of course, be the point. The Bhutto assassination could well make moderation impossible, as Islamist radicals savor their disruptive power — and enraged mainstream parties threaten the stability of the government itself. For now, the Bhutto killing has given the opposition a rare unity, and the elections, although delayed to Feb. 18, may well go ahead. The J.U.I. remains determined to continue campaigning. Six weeks, however, could prove to be a very long time in Pakistan's embattled politics.

In Quetta, Maulvi Noor Muhammad, who is 62, sat on the madrassa's cold concrete floor wrapped in a wool blanket as he leafed through a newspaper. Speaking in Pashto through an interpreter, he said that Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the J.U.I. chief, had visited three times in the previous few weeks to persuade him to enter the election. Muhammad claimed to have refused each time because he believed the J.U.I. had drifted from its core mission: to lead an aggressive Islamization campaign and provide political support to what he referred to as the mujahedeen, a term for Muslim fighters that can shift in meaning depending on who is speak-

ing. "Participating in this election would amount to treason against the mujahedeen," he said. I asked about the others in the party who had decided to run for office. Muhammad shook his head in disappointment and explained how, following the government operation against the Red Mosque rebels in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital city, in July, President Musharraf put religious leaders under tremendous pressure. "Musharraf threatened to raid several madrassas," Muhammad said. "The political mullahs got scared."

Maulana Fazlur Rehman is exactly the sort of "political mullah" whom Muhammad portrayed as running scared. In the past year, the J.U.I. chief has tried to disassociate himself from the new generation of Taliban wreaking havoc not only across the border in Afghanistan, as they have for years, but also increasingly in Pakistan. At the same time, Rehman has been trying to persuade foreign ambassadors and establishment politicians here that he is the only one capable of dealing with those same Taliban. (Rehman told me that he never offered Muhammad a chance to enter the election; he even added that the J.U.I. had already expelled the Taliban guru "on disciplinary grounds.") In the process, some Islamists maintain that Rehman has sold them out. Last April, a rocket whistled over the sugarcane fields that separate Rehman's house from the main road before crashing into the veranda of his brother's home next door. A few months later, Pakistani intelligence agencies discovered a hit list, drafted by the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, with Rehman's name on it.

"The religious forces are very divided right now," I was told by Abdul Hakim Akbari, a childhood friend of Rehman's and lifelong member of the J.U.I. I met Akbari in Dera Ismail Khan, Rehman's hometown, which is situated in the North-West Frontier Province. According to this past summer's U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, approved by all 16 official intelligence agencies, Al Qaeda has regrouped in the Tribal Areas adjoining the province and may be planning an attack on the American homeland. ■



# Response: The Next - Gen Taliban

By Arif Humayun

*Taliban objective of establishing an Islamic state is a mirage. They failed to implement that in Afghanistan; their Saudi Arabian and Pakistani mentors have similarly failed in their respective countries.*

Nicholas Schmidle (Next-Gen Taliban, New York Times, 6 Jan 2008) correctly summarizes the treacherous ideology fueling terrorism in Pakistan. He poignantly documents Taliban's basic objectives – establishment of an Islamic state where Shariah is implemented and Jihad is the norm to subdue opponents. His findings should become the basis for any strategy to deflate the irreconcilable notions of Islam and terrorism.

Global politics first glorified violence under the concept of Jihad after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan; it later demonized Jihad after accomplishing the objectives. That unleashed genie of political Islam cannot be bottled up by military means only; military action combined with conscientious intellectual efforts is required to explain the proper meaning of Shariah and Jihad to these brainwashed radicals.

Thirty years ago, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided the "Islamic" façade to the "Mujahideen" insurgents. A fatwa from Mufti Mahmood, a leading Pakistani political cleric and founder of Jamait-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI), declared Jihad against the Soviet occupation as a religious obligation. The JUI-run madrassas provided the initial crop of 'jihadis for that insurgency, created primarily by the US, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Several Taliban leaders (including Mullah Omar) are a product of the JUI madrassas. Ironically, the founding fathers of the Taliban movement have lost control of the monster they

created and a younger, more radicalized leadership has taken control. This is confirmed by the Mufti's son, Maulana Fazul-ur-Rehman, who assumed leadership of the JUI after his father's death.

The "war against terror" is an ideological war where Islam has been exploited for political purposes. The concept of Jihad as a violent and terrorist activity gained currency among mainstream Muslims about 150 years ago as a reactionary movement to global affairs. In 1979, that flawed concept was reinvigorated by large funds, arms and military training by the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Brainwashed madrassa students became tools for this political objective. Convinced of their righteousness after the Soviet defeat the radicals took on other groups that did not accept their convoluted interpretation of Islam. So much so, the new leadership even shuns their mentors who helped create them in the first place.

Radicals have hijacked Islam and the mainstream Muslims have to reassert control. Rejecting the flawed concepts of Sharia and Jihad has to be the beginning. The Quran explains Jihad as a means of self reformation and does not sanction any form of violence or terrorism. Sharia is the development of laws, based on Islamic principles and on reasoning, precedence, and consensus, among scholars. Formulated several centuries after the Prophet Mohammad's death, this was to be an evolving process that was terminated after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Had that process continued objectively, Shariah Law would have evolved to

be at least compatible with the Western Law.

Nicholas Schmidle's conversation with Abdul Ghafoor, a school teacher and jihadist with a Master degree in Islamic Theology from Pakistan, provides irrefutable evidence of how flawed Islamic concepts have corrupted the young minds. Such 'educated' yet medieval minds will continue to create future jihadis. The war on terror must also be fought on the intellectual front by teaching the correct Islamic concepts. Providing meaningful 'modern' education and employment will further help channel their energies towards constructive endeavors.

The new Taliban leadership's rejection of their mentors shows they are out of control. They recently murdered several tribal elders who tried to negotiate peace with the Pakistan military. Similarly, they rejected appeals from the Imam of Kaa'ba (Mecca) to help defuse the Red Mosque situation. Maulana Fazlullah, a protégé of the Red Mosque clerics, is now leading the current insurgency in Swat, a settled Pakistani region.

The Taliban objective of establishing an Islamic state is a mirage. They failed to implement that in Afghanistan; their Saudi Arabian and Pakistani mentors have similarly failed in their respective countries. It is time that the Muslim world realizes the folly of allowing the politicization of Islam and its hijacking by the Taliban. They should launch an intellectual front in the War on Terror and present the correct interpretations for Sharia and Jihad. ■

## “It is Not Man’s Place to Judge Blasphemers”

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By Sardar Anees Ahmad,  
Waterloo, New York

Imprisonment, 40 lashes, and a fine – all for allowing a teddy bear to be named Muhammad! A group of hoodlums rape an Arab woman, and the Saudi religious court orders her to receive 90 lashes! Extremists always lean on “Islam” to justify their actions. But does Islam condone this behavior?

Well, the Quran condemns blasphemy on ethical grounds five times,<sup>1</sup> but forbids man from punishing the blasphemer. In fact, the Quran instructs man to quietly disassociate from the company of blasphemers until they change their behavior. Blasphemy is a crime against Allah, not man. Consequently, man has been given no authority to punish the blasphemer. It is God Who can read a man’s heart, not man. For example, just as God supports a true prophet, He is responsible for punishing a false claimant. If the prophet is true and man attempts to obstruct his progress by labeling him a blasphemer, it is man who will suffer. If the prophet is false, man has no need to intervene, as God will. Either way, it simply does not make sense, nor is it allowed, for man to punish the blasphemer.

Regarding rape, the Quran declares just the calumny of chaste women as tantamount to damnation – leave alone rape.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the Quran declares torture to be worse than killing.<sup>3</sup>

If not the Quran, Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> must have encouraged it. The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who, as the de facto ruler of Medina, forgave Abdullah Ubay bin Salul’s blasphemy? The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who later would lead his funeral prayer? The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who forbade anyone from harming a Bedouin who passed water in the



mosque? The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who then later cleaned the urine with his own hands? The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who forgave Meccans who dumped the entrails of a camel on his back while he was prostrating before God? This is the man who encouraged the punishment of naming a teddy bear after him out of love?

The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who ordered that a rapist should be executed? The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who likened women unto “crystal”? The same Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who forgave a woman who attempted to assassinate him by feeding him poisoned meat? This is the man who encouraged a helpless woman to be punished for a crime committed against her own self?

Now, the reader should also be reassured that Muhammad’s<sup>sa</sup> noble example of tolerating blasphemy did not die with his passing. Sudan’s Article 125, under which the innocent teacher was charged with blasphemy, is similar to Pakistan’s Articles 295b and 295c.

Article 295 is notorious for punishing religious minorities with fabricated acts of blasphemy, especially the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Yet Ahmadi Muslims have maintained a pristinely pure public relations résumé – never guilty of verbal

or physical retaliation. In fact, many Ahmadi Muslims have migrated from Pakistan so the situation does not worsen.

Nevertheless, while naming a teddy bear ‘Muhammad’ can hardly be categorized as blasphemy, it does highlight an important point. The Muslim world’s sensitivity is not an isolated case. America, and at least 15 “progressive” European nations, has laws punishing blasphemy. This isolated case underscores the perverse view extremists hold in dealing with blasphemy.

And to the poor woman who has endured what no one should ever have to experience, our heart bleeds for you. What a horrible crime these jurists have committed against this innocent daughter of Arabia! The very people appointed to protect its citizens! Indeed, it is regarding such criminals that the Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> completely disassociated himself from, declaring that the clergy of the Latter Days, “would be the worst creatures under the firmament of heaven.”<sup>4</sup>

So where are these extremists getting these ideas from? Certainly not from the Holy Quran, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>.



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Atlanta Journal-Constitution

### The Teddy Bear Controversy

As a Muslim, I would like to express my dissatisfaction with the Sudanese government for letting the British teacher go to court over a simple misunderstanding. The teacher who reported her should have explained, instead, that the name of the Holy Prophet shouldn't be given to an animal.

This mistake would never have occurred in the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam, a sect that builds schools and hospitals free in impoverished countries. The Ahmadis, who are besieged around the world by extremists, continue to grow and do good works, such as feeding the poor and sending doctors to every world-wide disaster.

In short, all Muslims are not alike.

Allison Knight Khan  
Powder Springs, Georgia

### The forgotten Ahmadiyya women

Watching violence against Ahmadiyah on TV (again!) has encouraged me to present another side of the Ahmadiyah which usually receives little public attention; i.e. Ahmadi women.

People might know the Aisyiah of Muhammadiyah or the Muslimat of Nahdlatul Ulama, but few realize that Ahmadiyah also has its own women's organization, namely Lajnah Ima'illah Indonesia.

Being part of a minority, as well as of a controversial religious group, is not an easy for women. As the teachings of Ahmadiyah are regarded as heresy and a deviation within Islam, Ahmadi women have to face the stigma of being considered by some as infidels or apostates. More than that, many of them have to experience discrimination, alienation and even violence. Thus, Ahmadi women face a more complex social life than most women in Indonesia.

Some Ahmadi women were born into Ahmadi families, but others became Ahmadis because they were attracted to the controversial doctrines of



Ahmadiyah; e.g. the prophethood of Ghulam Ahmad and the death of Isa. Generally, those who were not born into Ahmadi families face greater challenges compared to those who belong to Ahmadi families. This is because when they made their decision to join Ahmadiyah, they had to deal with confrontation or even exclusion by their own families.

Thus their first struggle with being Ahmadis is to convince their families that they have the right to choose their own beliefs. In this regard, I would say this is one of the ways that Ahmadi women practice their freedom, freely selecting their religious affiliation.

Another consequence of being part of a minority religious group is that they have to cope with discrimination from those who express enmity toward Ahmadiyah. Discrimination potentially occurs not only in the surrounding neighborhoods but also in the workplace. Therefore, it is important to note that extra bravery and extra self-endurance become necessary in order for these women to survive.

With regard to the role of Ahmadi women as mothers, they have the extra task to protect and prepare their children to live as Ahmadis. Children often become the target of mockery because they are different from their friends. Thus, Ahmadi women play an important role in building confidence in their chil-

dren so they can preserve their identity.

Ahmadi women are not only precious for their own religious community, but also for Indonesian society at large. Unfortunately, because of their religious beliefs many people tend to ignore the fact that Ahmadi women can be seen as remarkable models of how women deal with hardship. Instead, many people prefer to judge Ahmadi women simply as followers of a deviant sect.

Lajnah Ima'illah Indonesia, the Ahmadiyah women's wing, may be less known compared to other women's organizations in Indonesia. This despite the fact more than 1,000 of its members are registered eye donors, making the organization the one with the most registered eye donors in the country. This great contribution is often ignored due to their controversial religious beliefs.

Looking at a different side of Ahmadiyah, I hope, can help people understand that differences need not lead to enmity. We should appreciate minority groups, which in truth make significant contributions to society. Why not build tolerance and begin to develop our country together?■

*The writer Winy Trianita is a graduate student in the Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies Program at UIN Jakarta, Indonesia. She can be reached at winy\_three @ yahoo.com.*



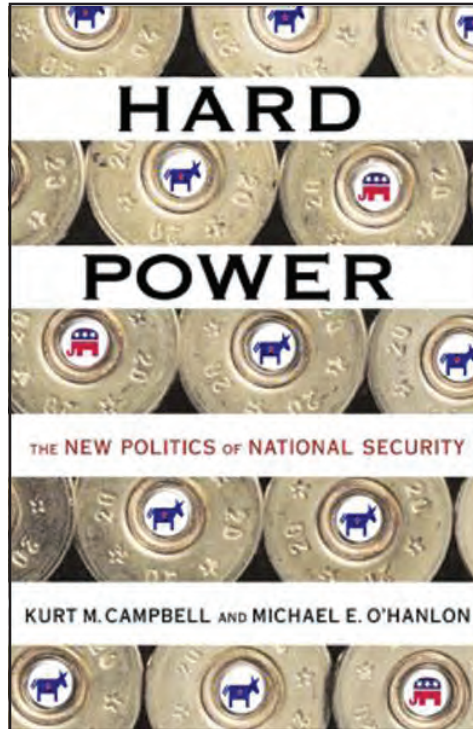
**Hard Power: The New Politics of National Security, Kurt M. Campbell and Michael E. O'Hanlon (Basic Books 2006).**

Review by Shazia Sohail,  
Hillsborough, CA

Campbell and O'Hanlon's *Hard Power: The New Politics of National Security* serves a two-fold purpose. First, it is a forceful manifesto for the judicious use of hard (meaning military) power in foreign policy issues, addressed to both Democratic and Republican presidential candidates alike. Second, it is a well-crafted effort to raise the self-esteem of the average American by playing down the damage done by the present government's botched attempt at wielding "hard power" in Iraq. In roughly 250 pages, it supplies an array of subjective advice to enable the presidential candidates to speak convincingly on the campaign trail on a variety of subjects related to National Security.

The topics for these talking points range from the composition of the military, improving homeland security, and winning the long-term war on terror, to security implications of the nation's energy policy, China's potential rise to super-power status, and nuclear nonproliferation. The authors' approach to foreign policy is predominantly neo-conservative, but they prefer to align themselves with "hard power Democrats," a group that is critical, not of the conception of Bush's national-security strategy, but rather of its implementation. When looked at in isolation, some of the foreign policy suggestions proffered to settle current disputes and forestall similar ones from recurring are excellent and display deep insight on the authors' part, but when examined in the context of the overall role of global police proposed for the United States military, their impact tends to be diminished.

The authors' chief audience is a small group of Democrats that agrees with the current administration's view of "American exceptionalism and the power of Democracy and American values" but tempers it with following strong military action with competent reconstruction of government and economic



*O'Hanlon and Campbell redefine the role of the president to primarily protect the American people, and the role of the military to protect its allies and economic interests.*

*Protecting the homeland, which has traditionally been understood to be the constitutional role of the military, has been relegated to the sphere of homeland security.*

system, and also focuses on forming strategic alliances the world over to promote mutual national-security and economic interests.

O'Hanlon and Campbell redefine the role of the president to primarily protect the American people, and the role of the military to protect its allies and economic interests. Protecting the homeland, which has traditionally been understood to be the constitutional role of the military, has been relegated to the sphere of homeland security. The budget proposed for the former is roughly ten times that of the latter. The rationale for this redefinition is based not on the constitution or traditional American values but on the voters' wishes. An exaggerated sense of legitimacy is ascribed to what the voters may or may not want to see and hear. They underestimate the intelligence of the American people by assuming that those who take the tough military action approach to national security come across as strong in character to the average voter.

The authors also lament the fact that "America's will to engage confidently and assertively in the world" has been severely damaged and "future leaders will have to work hard to mitigate the damage." During the course of reading the book one can see repeated attempts to restore the self-esteem of the average American by carefully taking the bite out of some harsh realities of the present administration's misadventure in the Middle East. Crucial details like the astronomical cost of the Iraq war, Iraqi death toll, and US support of a repressive regime in Saudi Arabia are somewhat underplayed, which only serves to weaken their claim of our moral ascendancy against China. But by and large their views are a welcome departure from characterizing the current global conflict as a fight between good and evil.

*Hard Power* is a carefully thought out and well written book, one that convincingly argues the case in favor of keeping errant nations around the world in check with a constant and credible threat of strong military action. If the criterion employed for use of military force was simply restoration of basic human rights, as agreed upon by a wide consensus of nations, this book would make perfect sense. But, as some would argue, invading a country for the sake of protecting our own "economic interests" is somewhat less than palatable and, almost certainly, unsustainable.

***Ahmadiyya Muslim Community condemns vulgar images***  
**About those Danish Cartoons, again...**

**T**he Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly condemns news from Denmark that a series of caricatures which caused a great deal of controversy two years ago have been reprinted. Such caricatures are extremely hurtful to all peace loving Muslims and not just those fanatical extremists who have tarnished the image of Islam.

Let there be no doubt that such caricatures are extremely provocative and inflammatory.

The Danish newspapers have allegedly justified their actions on the basis of defending their right to 'freedom of speech'. However such vulgarity regarding any sacred person of any religion can never be justified. Freedom of expression is not a licence to forget about the heartfelt sentiments of people.

Those who have allowed these cartoons to be published ought to be in no doubt that their actions will cause anguish to millions of people around the world.

The Press Secretary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Abid Khan said: "Muslims regard the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the most excellent model of virtue and dignity in the history of mankind. And thus these images are utterly offensive to any Muslim and indeed to any person who cares for the feelings of others.

The journalists involved know very well the reaction these cartoons caused two years ago. And thus by reprinting them they know that they are likely to cause severe distress to many millions of people around the world. What then can be the benefit of displaying such vulgar images?

It is reported that the Danish authorities have apprehended three persons in respect of a plot to harm one of the journalists involved with the original cartoons. If the Danish authorities are correct then we wholly condemn the motives of those three people as their actions can never be justified. However neither can the subsequent response of those Danish news editors who have allowed these hurtful repellent images to be publicly displayed once again."

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has spread throughout the world by adhering to its message of 'Love for All, Hatred for None'. It is hoped that this message is taken to heart by all people no matter what their colour, creed or religion. By printing these cartoons certainly those responsible have not followed this message of love but have in fact taken the opposite path.

It is further hoped that this sad episode does not result in the violent reaction that was witnessed two years ago. As Muslims we defend the honour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through our words and through our prayers and not through senseless violence that is never justified.

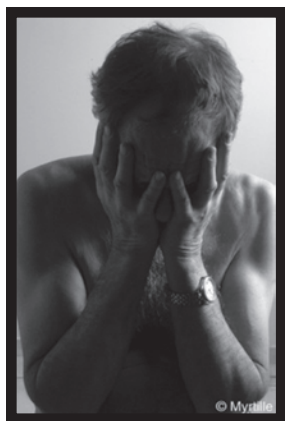
***Abid Khan (Press Secretary, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community)***

# **Perspective:**

## **Nature's response to sin...**

***One Friday afternoon, my secretary came to my office and said she had a question. She was wondering why my religion allows men to have more than one wife, but women are not allowed to have more than one husband.***

Late Friday afternoon, I have a hard time discussing anything especially after two o' clock. I just want to get the week over with and go home. I told her to think about this issue over the weekend and I will definitely discuss it on Monday.



She was a good secretary. She followed the instructions and marched in my office on Monday morning. Before I could say anything, she told me she had thought it through and it would not work. Upon my asking how she arrived

at that conclusion, she said for one thing, you wouldn't know who the father of a child is. It just does not fit in the scheme of nature.

Love thy enemy and turn the other cheek are a couple of the clichés people hear in church. They all sound good and make people feel graceful, but what do they mean? When people walk out of church do they really think they can act on them? Do they even understand what they imply in one's character? Do they know anyone who really has practiced these things?

I know the way one person understood it. He had a sign outside his shop on Peterson Avenue - "Love thy enemy, it'll drive him crazy."

We have heard in the mosque so many times, "Islam is a religion of nature." What does it really mean? Is it something that sounds good and therefore, we are happy to hear it? We feel good when we walk out of the mosque that our religion is unique. What are the practical implications of this statement? Do we even know how nature interacts with a religion?

The basic rule that exists in nature is death. Nature kills unless you defend yourself. Let me say for the computer buffs, death is the 'default' in nature's program. If we don't wear clothes and find shelter, nature would kill us.

Nature can bring us viruses and make us sick. If we don't take medicine, it would mean death. It is the same rule in the spiritual world. Unless we make an effort to protect ourselves, we will face a spiritual death by default. Islam provides that protection.

Another way to look at it is that Islam's teachings are based on human nature. The segregation of sexes in mixed company is something that Westerners laugh at. They call it backward and fundamentalism.

Watch what happens at a mixed cocktail party of the Westerners. Within half an hour, ladies start gathering on one side and men on the other. Their conversations are different. Men talk about sports and politics. I have no idea what ladies talk about because I don't hang around them to find out. I could try to guess, but that could get me in trouble. The point is that they mingle in groups because their nature demands it. They are much more comfortable in their group to express themselves.

It is due to nature's requirement that men are allowed to be married with more than one wife. This allowance actually comes in the context of war, which results in widows and orphan girls. Men get killed in the war. The ratio of women becomes much higher than the surviving men. Either they will be on the streets, become prostitutes or die of hunger and disease. Islam tells the surviving men to take care of them. Take them as legal wives and have legal children with them. They will inherit property and live with respect. Unlike Western culture, Islam would not allow mistresses or girlfriends. Of course, the allowance is open as an option for many conditions. War is only an example.

If you seek a solution in line with nature, you'll find it in the teachings of Islam. My secretary found that out on her own. That is why it is the religion of nature.

Islam is also a religion of nature because nature enforces its teachings.

When I came to the USA, there was a sexual revolution going on in America. I had to take a test for syphilis because Vietnam vets were getting it from fornication.

People want to sin with the plan of asking God's forgiveness later, but nature punishes them before they get a chance. By the time they found some solution for syphilis, another disease called herpes took over. By the time something was discovered to suppress herpes, the aids virus showed up. I emphasize that they are only able to suppress these diseases, not cure them.

Nature can be brutal when it comes to commandments involving sexual activity.

Any problem you see in society, such as high divorce rates, abortions, teenage suicides and pregnancies, results from violating the teachings of Islam. Thousands of people die on the highways each year because the commandment not to drink alcohol is violated. Politicians don't make a big deal of this, knowing that it kills many times over the number of people killed at the World Trade Center on 9/11. It would have a devastating effect on their congressional cocktail parties.

Nature always takes over and punishes the society for wrongdoing. It's the resultant widows, orphans and parents losing their young sons and daughters, which is the real tragedy.

Some teachings may not be clear how they fit within nature. We know that most of the teachings, as we see them and experience them, fit the criteria. We must conclude that the rest of them must also be consistent with that principle.

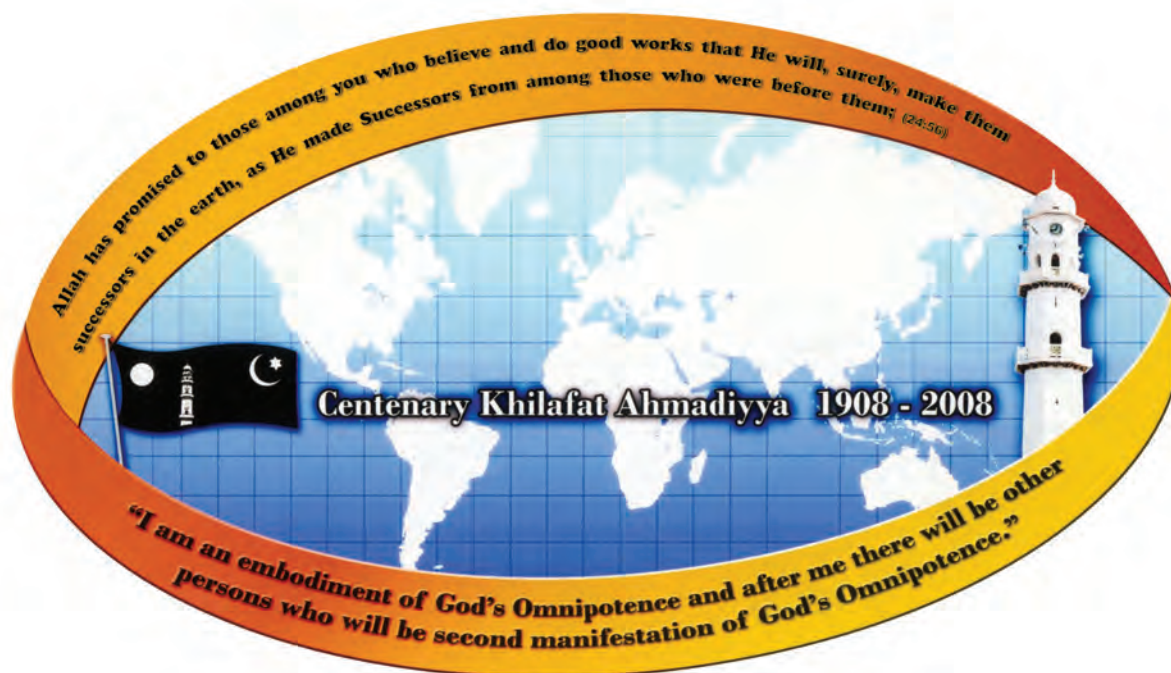
There is a very basic thing in nature about which the Holy Qur'an has given us direction. Work in the daytime and get rest and sleep at night. Most of the crime takes place at night. That is when all the bad elements come out. The scavenger animals as well as the humans come out of their holes. If only this basic instruction was followed, nature would help lower the crime.

Just think about any situation or problem, and look for a solution consistent with nature. It will bring you to the teachings of Islam. Your conscience will give you the answer.

Remember this rule: When your conscience tells you to do something, don't argue with it.

**Falahud Din Shams**





## Ahmadiyya Muslim Community **KHILAFAT 1908 - 2008**

**T**he word Khilafat means succession, and the Khalifa is a successor to a Prophet of Allah whose goal is to carry to completion the tasks of reformation and moral training that were seeded by the Prophet. The community of followers of a Prophet of Allah continues to nurture its faith and practices under the blessing of the institution of Khilafat for as long as Allah wishes. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“Allah had promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear: They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then whoso is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious.” (Surah Al-Nur, Verse 56).



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